

# **NURTURING ATLANTICISTS IN CENTRAL EUROPE: CASE OF SLOVAKIA AND POLAND**

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**INSTITUTE FOR  
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# NURTURING ATLANTICISTS IN CENTRAL EUROPE: CASE OF SLOVAKIA AND POLAND

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This publication summarizes the findings of the project and brings the main contributions of the conference held in Bratislava, December 6, 2007.

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## *Introduction*

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Your discussion today is particularly appropriate. Shortly, NATO foreign ministers will hold a Transatlantic dinner on the margins of their meeting in Brussels.

An article in a prominent American professional journal in summer 2003 announced “the end of Atlanticism.” An article in another publication in October 2007 speaks of “Horizons of the new Atlanticism”. In both Prague and Washington a month or so ago, conferences were held to talk about the new Atlanticism in Central and Eastern Europe.

What has changed? I would argue, not much. Now the question for you and for all of us is, in the words of NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer “Can the transatlantic community deliver?” Transatlantic relations may have suffered “painful adjustments,” but that period should not be confused with a decline in those relations.

We in the U.S. Embassy Bratislava are involved in this issue not as just an interested observer, but as an actor. We are working to increase exchanges between US and Slovak universities; in particular, we are working with Matej Bel University’s new initiative to establish Slovakia’s first ever graduate program in defense and national security studies, by facilitating contacts with such programs at U.S. universities for purposes of sharing expertise on curriculum development and program “best practices”.

The premise of your workshop today is that there is a shortage of Atlanticists. Is it really an option NOT to be a transatlanticist?

We really are on the same team on most issues. Of course, there are exceptions, but identities have much more in common. We do some things quite

well together. The world needs U.S. and the EU to work together. Europe leads in Bosnia, in the Congo. Will the EU and the U.S. have to work together on Kosovo? If we are to avoid another crisis, yes.

Look at the issues we face, and ask whether there really is an alternative to the U.S. and the EU working closely together. Look at energy efficiency, energy diversification, combating climate change. Look at the Middle East. Role of Quartet and Tony Blair, France’s role in hosting pledging conference for assistance to Palestinians.

President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert will launch full-scale negotiations, including on final status issues. Would that have been possible without U.S. and European cooperation? Do the two sides need the role of the U.S. – and Gen. Jones – if they are to make progress in those talks?

On the occasion of the recent conference in Annapolis, Secretary Rice stated a stark challenge for the international community, one that we on both side of the Atlantic must meet: Inaction is not an option. I am concerned that the next generation of young Palestinians will no longer believe in the two-state solution. .. and so we have to make the two-state solution a reality for Israelis and Palestinians.

Look at Iran: Shared perception that an Iran with nuclear weapons would be a very dangerous and unacceptable situation. Sanctions are one tool of a diplomatic approach. We all want a diplomatic solution and are operating on that basis. Why does the world need the U.S. and the EU operating in concert? Because the international community would be sending a very dangerous signal to proliferators or potential proliferators

that the community is incapable of carrying out effective diplomacy. The appropriate venue is the UN SC.

Unfortunately, the U.S. and the EU had to issue a very negative assessment of the Iranian government position based on last weekend's talks in Paris. Mr. Solana called it a disappointment, and the French called it a disaster. Most importantly, the new Iranian negotiator, Mr. Jalili, bluntly told the group anything they had discussed and any progress they might have made with his predecessor was null and void, as if it had never happened, he said. He blatantly contradicted Mr. El-Baradei's assessment of Iranian cooperation by saying that the IAEA had gotten everything it requested from Iran. Very difficult to think of an alternative to stiffer sanctions at this point.

Look at Russia: EU and U.S. are faced with a Russia with whom we want and need good relations, but whose actions – in domestic and foreign policy – compromise democracy in Russia, distort energy markets and create doubts about the reliability of supply, and complicate the solution of Europe's last "frozen conflicts." We must not stop emphasizing that NATO enlargement is not directed against Russia.

We have to think of possible development of a regional missile defense architecture that would integrate U.S. and Russian defensive assets, including radars. This would enhance our ability to monitor emerging threats from the Middle East and could also include the use of assets from NATO Allies. Secretaries Rice and Gates also proposed the idea of a phased operations approach. This idea, which is still under development, proposes that the construction of the sites in Poland and the Czech Republic would be completed, while activation of the sites - turning the switch, so to speak - would be tied to specific threat indicators. Although the U.S. and Russia would cooperate to monitor jointly the Iranian missile program, the U.S. would make decisions on how to make our European MD elements operational in response to how we see the threat evolve. The assertion that Washington and Moscow would have to agree jointly whether a sufficient threat exists from a third country (such as Iran) prior to activating any U.S. European-based

MD system is incorrect. There is no such agreement or understanding with Russia.

Look at Afghanistan, where the U.S. and the EU are absolutely essential to the training of the Afghan military and police to enable this country to shed the tyranny of the Taliban once and for all.

Being at Atlanticiſt is not simply one option to be considered. It is an essential choice if the international community is to be able to meet its most crucial challenges. Would or could another perspective enable the world to deal with the global challenge of climate change? No.

Center for Transatlantic Relations in Washington just released annual study of transatlantic economy: Investment and capital flows across Atlantic continue to bind us tightly together. EU investment in U.S. was 29 billion euro in 2005, compared to combined 8 billion for China and India. It rose further 12 percent in 2006. EU took 59% of U.S. direct investment outflows in 2006. Together, the U.S. and Europe represent 60 percent of the world's total GDP.

The first meeting of the Transatlantic Economic Council took place less than a month, designed to streamline regulations that limit trade between the EU and the US, to the benefit of the living standards of both Europeans and Americans. To quote the head of the European delegation to the Council, Gunter Verheugen, "I am absolutely impressed that after so few months of preparation, we have been able to make more progress in one meeting than we could do with the previous method in years." And it should get even better.

Over the past few years, U.S. and EU cooperation on energy security and climate change issues has deepened and improved. As one example, the U.S. and the EU have set up joint biofuels and energy efficiency working groups to address some of our common goals. These working groups have held joint meetings on resource assessments of biofuels and are looking at joint research on second generation biofuels. On energy efficiency, the EU has adopted the U.S.'s Energy Star label for the most energy efficient office products - a voluntary labeling scheme to explain to consumers the benefits of top-rated appliances in those categories.



On September 19, 2007 the European Commission issued a two draft directives aimed at separating the supply/production of gas and electricity from transmission networks for both internal EU and external suppliers. These unbundling proposals, which are very controversial in several member states, will take at least two years to negotiate and implement since they need to be agreed by the European Council and Parliament and then transposed into national law.

Look at Kosovo, where we make up two-thirds of the Troika, and more importantly, all of KFOR (16,000 troops) – and, hopefully a future ESDP Mission. It is a transatlantic effort to ensure that Kosovo authorities live up to their responsibilities to protect minority rights and property. We want a secure, stable, democratic, multi-ethnic Kosovo.

The U.S. and the EU co-sponsor UN resolutions on human rights. We fight transnational crime together, block financing of terrorism, and we have taken a major step in aviation security for everyone – Europeans, Americans, and every other nationality, through our agreement on the use of Passenger Name records.

Let's look at Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) – the U.S. and the EU cooperated in creating a very reasonable and flexible initiative to address the concerns that Russia has expressed. So far, the Russians do not seem to be in a mode to find a constructive solution. So, on the day that Israelis and Palestinians begin their peace negotiations, Moscow may suspend its participation in the CFE Treaty. But it will not be for lack of effort on the part of the U.S. and the EU.

The United States and our Allies have responded clearly that we do not agree that those stated concerns, which relate primarily to NATO enlargement and its consequences, constitute a sufficient basis to suspend implementation of this major Treaty. We have held firmly on the issue of flanks. However, we are working to try to bridge what currently divides us. Russia's threat to suspend implementation of the current CFE Treaty is a matter of serious concern to the United States and to our NATO Allies. We have said that publicly and we

have certainly conveyed that message in our bilateral meetings.

I want to stress that, in developing these ideas, the United States and NATO Allies have worked hand-in-glove. We also have been consulting closely with the Georgian and Moldovan governments. I personally traveled to Chisinau after the "2+2" meeting to consult with President Voronin and his government, and separately met with Georgian Foreign Minister Bezhuashvili to elicit his views as well. Assistant Secretary Fried was just in Tbilisi for further consultations. A transparent, consultative process is a key to maintaining Allied unity and effectiveness.

Indeed, we have been brainstorming with Allies, and with Moldova and Georgia, to develop creative ideas to help us move forward. Georgian officials have made clear that they consider CFE and the Istanbul commitments to have been responsible for the withdrawal of nearly all of Russia's military bases and equipment from Georgian territory. They consider this a major success and they, like we, support the Treaty and the Adapted Treaty.

More broadly, the U.S. and the EU should see current problems in relations with Russia as a challenge to be faced jointly. The U.S. and the EU need each other's complementary efforts to help bring about a more constructive Russia approach to Iran, CFE, Korea, Kosovo and other areas. The U.S. and the EU are working together to look at ways of reducing energy dependence on one source. We should jointly encourage Russia's accession to the WTO.

How are U.S.-EU relations? I think much better than they were in 2003, but, as studies like Transatlantic Trends indicate, attitudes are not as positive as we would like them to be. That said, we now have a French American Caucus in the U.S. Congress. That's progress. In this case, public attitudes will lag behind those of policymakers, I believe.

There is a real need to build more educational linkages between both sides of the Atlantic. GMF fellows is a great program, but it can reach only a limited number of people, albeit influential ones.

You are the past, current and future policymakers or policy shapers. So whatever analysis of transatlantic relations you make today, remember the most important thing: shaping the European - U.S. relationship and U.S.-European policy in dealing with the world's challenges, is not a spectator sport. You are participants, and you have ob-

ligations and responsibilities – to educate yourself, educate others, and to make your voices heard at the highest levels.

Opening remarks to the workshop „Nurturing Atlanticists in Central Eastern Europe - a Neglected Territory?“ held in Bratislava on December 6, 2007.

# **PUBLIC DISCOURSE AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**



## *Atlanticists, Transatlantic Agenda and U.S.-Slovakia Relationships in Contemporary Slovakia*

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### INTRODUCTION

As we were finalizing this study, three events have occurred.

First, in March 2008, Slovak Interior Minister Robert Kaliňák and his American counterpart U.S. State Secretary for Homeland Security Michael Chertoff signed a Memorandum of Understanding concerning a visa-free travel regime between the two countries in Washington on Monday which outlines steps to put the country on track for visa-free travel to the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, in April 2008, The American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) informed its members that as a recent illustration of AmCham's long-lasting active engagement in consulting and commenting lawmaking covering business environment in Slovakia, its comments has been incorporated into the draft of the Legislative Intent of the Law on Vocational Education, an important piece of legislation in the transformation of education curricula to better respond to the current labor market needs.<sup>3</sup>

Thirdly, in May 2008, The Center for North American Studies was launched at The University of Economics in Bratislava, in cooperation with the non-governmental Euro-Atlantic Center. The new

institution will study and disseminate knowledge about the United States and Canada and organize students and faculty exchanges. Also, commemorating the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its establishment, the reinvigorated Slovak Atlantic Commission has announced an ambitious continuation of its activities. "We are a value-based organization," says the SAC in its statement from June 2008. "We believe in strong security community; we believe in transatlantic partnership and its values; we believe in international cooperation." A reflection of these ambitions is the SAC's involvement in the preparation of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Security Conference GLOBSEC 2009.

It would be obviously premature to make any optimistic conclusions about a revival of mutual Slovak-American relations only on these events. Nevertheless, they can serve not only as a prelude to our discussion on current status of Atlanticism in Slovakia, but they also suggest the future fields and terrains where the U. S. - Slovak cooperation and Atlanticist agenda can be nurtured and cultivated – business, economy, education, security, young generation, people-to-people contacts.

The study is divided into two parts. The first one deals with history and politics. Any analysis of Slo-

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<sup>1</sup> The first part of the text was authored by Martin Bútora; the second part was co-authored by Martin Bútora and Olga Gyárfášová.

<sup>2</sup> Do Ameriky pôjdeme bez víz už v októbri [Visa-free travel to the USA will be introduced already in October 2008]. *Hospodárske noviny*, 4.6.2008.

<sup>3</sup> "We are very proud of the fact that the Ministry of Education has officially invited AmCham to join the Advisory Committee on the Law on Vocational Schools and thus to be one of the key subjects participating on actual drafting of the Law on Vocational Education and Training. In addition, AmCham Slovakia has collected case studies of successful business-academic cooperation which were presented to our readers. (...) We hope that the modernized system of education in Slovakia will more flexibly reflect labor market needs; this will eventually lead to increased employment and a better quality of life for Slovak citizens," writes AmCham in its journal *Connections* in April 2008.

vak-American relationships cannot avoid a reference to modern history, to our legacies. As a new chapter of this history started to be written after the fall of communism, it is useful to offer a periodization of Slovak-American relationships after 1989 which reflects different phases in America's perception of Slovakia and vice versa. The next passage describes some more recent foreign policy tendencies in Slovakia (after the 2006 elections), which have materialized together with the current decrease of Atlanticism. Also, some additional factors influencing Atlanticism in Slovakia (the phenomenon of "Europeanization" will be briefly discussed).

The second part brings an overview of institutions and actors active in developing Slovak-American relations and/or working on different aspects of transatlantic agenda.

## **PART ONE: FROM LEGACIES TO CONTEMPORARY ENVIRONMENT**

### **1. LEGACIES**

Some of the legacies are similar to other Central-Eastern European states, others are different.

Among the similarities, it is first and foremost massive and widespread emigration to America. For more than a century, the American dream presented an attractive promise of escaping the poverty and oppression at home. The second and third generations of immigrants have acquired the qualities that were lacking back in the "old countries": a serene self-confidence and a sharper sense of personal responsibility. Each face, each little house, tells the story of a personal struggle to make the American dream of liberty, opportunity, equality, dignity, and self-government come true.

And even if this period has been studied also in the past, the limited space for free research has not allowed the broader public to fully embrace both the very substance and the nuances of the Slovak immigration to America. On the one hand, due to a certain "return" of topics and themes typical for the period of mass emigration (revival of capitalism, high unemployment in some areas of the country) as well as due to some new phenomenon (worries of brain drain), in the last decade there has been invigorated interest in situations related to emigration and immigration. Again and again, people are re-discovering the high numbers of those who have left their homeland and the impact of it for life at home<sup>4</sup>. There is also shared understanding of the role which those migrants who returned have played in Slovak life at home, as "modernizers" in social and economic terms.<sup>5</sup> The students in schools are taught about political activists among the Slovak Americans ("americkí Slováci" in Slovak) who were free to associate, who supported Slovak claims in the last decades of the Monarchy, made common treaties with the Czechs (Cleveland and Pittsburg Treaty), and contributed to the creation of Czecho-Slovakia in 1918. (They have played a more problematic role in the following decades, at the eve of WW II and later, especially in periods when their leadership ranks were penetrated by persons connected with the war-time Slovak State in 1939-1945.)

On the other hand, general public has not yet fully comprehended that the whole "emigration/immigration agenda" in Slovak-American relations was not only about poor Slovaks seeking a better life for themselves and their families (and, at least some of them, continuing it after their return), but also about enriching the new American homeland by their contributions, helping to strengthen the societal fabric of American life, to build American econ-

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<sup>4</sup> In a recent reference to Zemplín region in Eastern Slovakia, historian Martin Molnár shows that practically each family has had a relative who emigrated, and the original expatriates from the times of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy have been followed and accompanied by other dozens of thousands leaving Czechoslovakia due to economic difficulties in 20-ties and 30-ties or due to political reasons in 1938-39, in 1945, after 1948, and 1968. See Martin Molnár: *Ža vysťahovalectvom je zlá ekonomická a sociálna situácia*. [Emigration is caused by bad economic and social situation] TASR, 19. mája, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> "A particular social group emerged - which we already know well from literary sources - called 'Amerikáni'," says Molnár. "If they brought money with them, they bought land, built brick houses, their children went to different schools, they dressed differently etc. And that was good, because they brought from abroad experience and innovations, which could only be beneficial for this underdeveloped country." Molnár: *Ža vysťahovalectvom...*



omy, prosperity, liberty, and security, to encourage and broaden American imagination in art. In fact, it is only now, after almost two decades of post-communist transformation, that Slovakia is gradually revealing the richness of mutual ties in the past<sup>6</sup> – so it was not by chance that the above-mentioned inauguration of the newly established Center for North American Studies at the University of Economics in Bratislava was greeted by a new ballet performance inspired by Andy Warhol (in fact, until recently, the Ruthenian or Carpatho-Rusyn patriots have been much more vociferously claiming their closeness to this avant-garde artist whose parents were born in Medzilaborce in Eastern Slovakia).

This lack of confidence, so important for developing fruitful and equal partnerships, has been reflected in the fact that Slovaks have not had great political or cultural figures and/or great political events that would capture American imagination – like Poles with Tadeusz Kościuszko and Kazimierz Puławski, with Warsaw uprising, with Solidarity and Lech Walesa; like Hungarians with Lajos Kossuth who has a bust in the U.S. Congress, and with Hungarian revolution in 1956; like Czechs with Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk whose monument was unveiled in Washington in 2003, with Václav Havel and freedom-fighters. We have not had our own Czesław Miłosz or Milan Kundera. While all those nations, together with the Baltics, have been perceived as the victims of oppression – the Slovaks were remembered in American iconography as a part of this story, regretful, but heroic, only in so far as we were a part of the former Czechoslovakia which has presented a warning testimony of Western failures and defeats – Munich in 1938, the communist coup d'état in 1948, and Soviet occupation in 1968. Once Slovakia was considered as a separate entity, it was, unfortunately, rather associated with the Holocaust than with the tradition of anti-Nazi Uprising against the Nazis in 1944.

Another legacy, which cannot be ignored, is that, unlike, for instance, in Poland, America has not

been perceived as our prime ally standing against “eternal enemies” (that is, in case of Poland, against Prussia and Nazi Germany, as well as Czarist and Bolshevik Russia). Moreover, the relationships towards Russia and Russians were more positive than, for instance, in Poland, in Hungary or in Baltic states. Indeed, with the exception of Soviet invasion in 1968 when Russian tanks have eventually removed a popular leader of Prague Spring Alexander Dubček, an ethnic Slovak, from the scene, there has not been a tradition of mass anti-Russian feelings in Slovakia. On the contrary, Slovak Romanticism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and some of its leaders saw the Slavic Russia as a possible savior from enforced Magyarization (and) Western liberalism. (To put it metaphorically, in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, one cannot find on the main City Hall a statement like that by President Bush saying that “anyone who would choose Lithuania as an enemy has also made an enemy of the United States of America”...)

However, in spite of those ambivalences, one can say that thanks to numerous personal and family ties, during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for average people the relationships were by and large rather positive than negative and for many generations America was simply America – a promised land of opportunities.

This tradition has been broken by two regimes, Slovak wartime state, Hitler's ally who in 1941 formally declared “war” to the United States, and by communist regime. They established a tradition of political anti-Americanism, which has been resurging in 90-ties and later. Usually it has been a part of a broader political phenomenon, that of anti-Westernism. In the field of foreign policy it inclined to the concept of Slovakia as a “bridge between West and East” or, worse, an isolationistic-neutralist version of Slovak foreign policy. But even in communist era, some popular positive images of America were widespread – like that of American culture, especially of music (from rock and roll and beat

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<sup>6</sup> One of the illustrations is the US Embassy-sponsored historic photo exhibit, “Slovakia, Slovaks and Connections on Historic Postcards and Photographs,” opened in May 2008 which, according to an American diplomat Keith Hughes “highlights the very deep and very personal relationship between Slovaks and Americans.” See Embassy Events, <http://slovakia.usembassy.gov/>.

to jazz and protest songs), film, and literature; like admiration of American landing on the Moon as a great technological achievement and an evidence of the U.S. superiority in comparison to the Soviet Union; like a country enabling its citizens to enjoy various life-styles; like a country of public figures emanating spontaneous sympathy, from John Fitzgerald Kennedy to Martin Luther King.

## 2. STAGES OF MUTUAL PERCEPTION AFTER 1989

Since 1989 to 2006, we have been witnessing at least three phases of American political perception of Slovakia and five stages of Slovak perception of America.

On the American side, during **the first phase** Slovakia has moved from a relatively unknown territory to a problematic territory with ambivalent chances to master its independence in a democratic and pro-Western way. The first symptoms of nationalism in 1990 and later have been critically portraying by Western media. After the defeat of liberal-conservative government in 1992 elections and soon after the dissolution of Czecho-Slovakia the national populists led by Vladimír Mečiar and supported by Slovak National Party took the helm, and the revived anti-American rhetoric has moved from the margin to the center. At the end of this phase, Slovakia was labeled as a “black hole” in political jargon and only a “partially free” country in Freedom House assessment.

**The second phase** has started after the 1998 parliamentary elections with a sort of “discovery” of Slovakia’s potentials, followed by U.S. support for entry into OECD, NATO, and the EU and has been completed by relatively frequent high-level political contacts, including a first-ever visit of the U.S. President to Slovakia in 2005, and with a U.S. recognition of Slovak reform dynamism. In political and business circles, the relationships were perceived as very favorable and Slovakia was often mentioned as an example of a “successful catch-up” in the process of democratic transformation.

**The third phase** has started after the 2006 parliamentary elections in Slovakia. On the one hand, it reflects a decreased intensity of high-level political

contacts (which is paradoxically co-determined by Slovakia’s integration success and a certain “lack of agenda” in mutual cooperation), a certain U.S. embarrassment around political orientation and rhetorical statements of some representatives of the current leading Slovak political establishment, as well as disagreements on some political and security issues (Kosovo, missile defense). On the other hand, continuing U.S. economic presence and business ties provide a solid soil for nurturing mutual ties.

On the Slovak side, at the very beginning, in **the first phase**, it was rather lack of knowledge, unawareness or even ignorance.

Very soon, however, during **the second phase**, America was discovered or “rediscovered”, by actors of civic society, by businessmen, and some politicians.

After turbulences in mid 90-ties, this was followed by **the third phase** full of with suspicion, resentments, antipathy or even hostility demonstrated by political establishment under Mečiar, and by feelings of sympathy and hope on the side of democratic opposition.

Then, after the defeat of Mečiar’s camp in 1998, came a relatively long-lasting **fourth phase**, which in its best part could be called “a love affair”. Led by the new administration of Mikuláš Dzurinda, Slovakia, a country without strong Western patrons and sympathizers, all of the sudden has opted for and has acquired a sympathetic ally and partner. This has been a real U-turn in mutual relationships that resulted in multi-layer cooperation, in U.S. support of Slovakia’s integration efforts, and in a full Slovak support for the U.S. foreign policy, both in Clinton and Bush II era. The word “multi-layer” is not a phrase: there have been intensive political, military, and security relationships, there has been progress in economic links, there has been cooperation in the field of civil society, and there have been many people to people contacts.

**The fifth phase** has started two years ago, when elections in Slovakia won a party whose chairman has been a permanent critic of U.S. foreign policy, and since then, official political relations did not see much development. Robert Fico, the new Prime Minister, has repeatedly criticized not only sending



a Slovak military unit to Iraq, but also the “excessively pro-American” policy of the previous Dzurinda government. The new administration promptly negotiated with its U.S. and Iraqi counterparts, and the Slovak military contingent returned home at the end of February 2007. At the same time, there is continuity on the level of the Foreign Ministry, which keeps the relationships going with an appropriate diplomatic routine. While vivid links of the business sector with its American partners are flourishing, the capacities of current political opposition do not seem to be sufficient for further cultivation of their relationships with U.S. partners, and civil society actors are rather concentrating the efforts to develop their “niches” within European Union.

This periodization suggests that perhaps with the exception of Serbia, there has not been any other “new democracy” in the Central-Eastern and Southern Europe which was led for quite a long period of time by an anti-American political representation. This could also to a certain extent explain the very opposite behavior of those Slovak political elites, which has successfully turned the country to the West after the change in 1998 elections.

And it should be also reminded, that the current cabinet is made up not only of the victorious Smer-Social Democracy, which might be reluctant toward warmer relationships with the US because of its ideological background, but also of parties for whom relations with the US were a sensitive issue. In 1994-1998, the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) led by Vladimír Mečiar and the Slovak National Party (SNS) chaired by Ján Slota were part of a government that led Slovakia into international isolation and delayed the country’s entry to NATO and the EU.

## *2.1. Foreign Policy Context*

This brief description of phases of mutual relationships and their perception should be also evaluated in the broader context of Slovakia’s foreign policy. Since the emergence of an independent Slovak Republic in 1993, the country’s foreign policy has gradually come to rest on three fundamental pillars: an European pillar (full integration into the European Union – EU), transatlantic pillar (developing transatlantic links through membership in NATO),

and neighborly pillar (promoting good relations with neighboring countries).

Complementing the three main pillars were additional three accents related to the country’s bilateral and regional relations. The first was an emphasis on Visegrad cooperation, which was of particular importance because political, practical, and symbolic support of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic was instrumental in the successful completion of Slovakia’s EU and NATO integration. As time went by, Slovakia also began to accentuate good relations with Ukraine, its largest neighbor, revising the special “above-standard relationship” with Russia that the Mečiar regime had fostered as an alternative to Slovakia’s westward integration. The third accent concerned the Balkans, where the sharing of Slovakia’s own transition experiences helped promote democratization, economic development, and prospects for EU integration.

Rounding out the three pillars and three accents, Slovak foreign policy gradually developed three specific features. The first was greater predictability, reliability, and consistency on the international scene. A second feature was activism on various levels. Slovakia was a staunch advocate of further EU enlargement, not only for Bulgaria and Romania but also for Croatia and Serbia. Slovakia also began exporting the lessons of its economic and structural reforms to the Balkan countries and Ukraine, especially the lessons learned in catching up with the integration process. Slovak diplomats earned respect from Montenegrin, Serbian, and EU officials for their professional conduct in preparing the referendum on independence in Montenegro. Slovakia was also elected a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, where it was keeping clear of direct involvement in complicated regional conflicts on the Council’s agenda, and where the country has typically voted with its NATO and EU allies. The third feature has been cooperation between official diplomacy and civic diplomacy. Think tanks specializing in international relations emerged hand in hand with the birth of Slovakia’s independent foreign policy, actively influenced policy-making and became involved in the struggle over the pro-Western orientation practically from the outset. Civil society organizations participated in public debates, and action-oriented NGOs engaged in

direct actions, launching projects to generate support for Slovakia's NATO and EU memberships or to provide development and democracy assistance abroad.

All that has contributed to a respected position of the Slovak Republic on international scene. Though a small state, Slovakia has become a valuable partner for its allies in the EU, for the U.S. as well as for the countries striving for democratic reforms. Through its foreign policy activism, due to its reform dynamism at home and because of its readiness to share its experiences with the others, Slovakia has been contributing to international security and stability also indirectly, emanating a sort of "soft power", and by its successes presenting an attractive and acceptable pattern for countries with similar problematic historical burdens and legacies, an example showing that a positive change is possible.

Already in 2002, Karen Henderson, a scholar well acquainted with Slovakia's conditions could say that while "Slovakia really became visible to the outside world for the first time when it became an independent state on 1 January 1993," since then, "it has become one of the most prosperous post-communist states."<sup>7</sup> According to another foreign observer, while Slovakia was not so much a foreign policy player on a global scale, it has become increasingly significant on a regional level. In 2005, at the time of Bush-Putin summit held in Bratislava, John Kubiniec, regional director for Central and Eastern Europe at Freedom House in Warsaw, commented: "Slovaks are great believers and supporters of the transitional democratic experience, not just its politicians but also its business people, civic leaders, NGOs and think tanks – even the media. If you look at Slovakia in that context, it's a very important country."<sup>8</sup>

In fact, thanks to the necessity to "catch-up" with other aspirants, foreign policy steps undertaken by the Dzurinda cabinet have been coherent, and on vital goals, national consensus has been achieved. And this has brought results: membership in NATO, EU, and OECD, influx of FDI, and entering Euro zone in 2009.

After 2006 elections a new phase has started. While some goals of the previous era have persisted (entering the Schengen area and the Euro-zone) and in several fields the continuity has been preserved (cooperation within EU and NATO; involvement in Western Balkan; support of Ukraine's integration aspirations), at the same time, some new accents have appeared.

As we suggested, in 1999-2006 period the transatlantic pillar and the close relationship with the United States belonged to firm fundamentals of Slovakia's foreign policy. The key security and defense strategy documents approved by the government and parliament in 2005 defined Slovakia's orientation as "Euro-Atlantic". According to them, Slovakia supports NATO as the basis of the European security architecture, and welcomes a strengthened security role for the EU only if it is compatible with commitments towards NATO. Besides military and security cooperation, Slovakia, though a small country, had become a valued U.S. partner in recent years due to its clear pro-Western orientation, its courage in implementing difficult political and economic reforms (i.e. new tax policy), its high economic growth, its willingness to share its transition experiences with neighboring states and the countries of Western Balkan. All this was reflected in the high level of relations between both countries, and in frequent meetings between the highest state officials.

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<sup>7</sup> Karen Henderson: *The Escape from Invisibility*. New York, Routledge 2002.

<sup>8</sup> "Slovakia has demonstrated a remarkable turnaround in the last six or seven years in terms of building a democratic society. As such, it is a stabilizing presence in a region that is more or less in transition," continues the article in *The Slovak Spectator*. "According to Kubiniec, Slovakia is an ally of the US and a vigorous proponent of democratic values; at the same time, it retains neutrality that is important to states that have not yet embraced democracy. What makes Slovakia stand out from its neighbors, according to Freedom House, is the country's interest in staying engaged with the political destiny of the region. Slovakia has not so much attempted to insert itself but rather has attempted to play an important role, working towards supporting transitions to democracy in other post-Communist states in a way that very few countries in the region have. In other words, Slovakia is more willing than its neighbors to export its experience to countries like Ukraine and the Balkans." Julie Garrison Frederick: Regional mentor to its neighbors. Bush-Putin summit - Slovakia remains engaged in political destiny of the region. *The Slovak Spectator*, 21. 2. 2005.

The official Slovak-American relations, which have reached a pinnacle of intensity at the beginning of 2006, have somewhat cooled off in 2007-2008. The two countries continue to consult on routine business and to cooperate in fighting terrorism and within the NATO framework. Slovakia's ministers make visits to the United States, but in fact, the only perceptible Slovak diplomatic initiative with respect to the U.S. was participating in a joint effort with other new members of the EU to encourage the Bush administration to liberalize its visa policies – which is not enough for full-fledged allied relations. More importantly, PM Fico has repeatedly criticized the U.S.-led efforts to install anti-missile shield in the Czech Republic and Poland and even has not hesitated to accept the language and arguments of its most vocal critic, Russian President Putin. And it is not just the anti-missile system where the Slovak Premier and some of the ministers in his cabinet or some of his partners in the current ruling coalition have been voicing opinions and positions similar to those pronounced by the Russians, starting from Iraq to Kosovo.

At the same time, after some turmoil, the U.S. partners have appreciated Slovakia's position regarding to commitments in Afghanistan, including the recent promise to increase the number of troops from current 69 to 280 by 2010.

## 2.2. *The “Europeanization” Context*

Besides some particular Slovak aspects, there are also other factors influencing Atlanticism in the CEE states which are not very favorable for the cultivation of Atlanticism.

As we already suggested, **the first** widespread phenomenon is continuing Europeanization of life, which has become an encompassing reality. The administration has declared completing of the integration process, i.e. joining the Schengen area by the beginning of 2008 and adopting the single currency by the beginning of 2009 to be two of its immediate priorities. And after the European institutions

have approved the adoption of euro in Slovakia, both the public discourse as well as private attention is overwhelmingly devoted to different aspects of this process and American/Atlantic/Transatlantic themes are sometimes limited to information on decreasing value of US dollar...<sup>9</sup>

Slovaks have repeatedly expressed highly positive stance towards the EU, which is now supported by the injections from EU structural funds helping Slovakia's economy to prosper, Slovakia's infrastructure to improve and Slovakia's regions to revive. Similarly to other new EU member states, influx of money from EU structural fund is immense, and transformative effects of the Union's manna are visible even in the most distant villages in the countryside.

It will take some time until the general public will start to pay more attention not only to materialistic, but also to other distinctive features of “European way of life” that are reflecting values and post-materialistic attitudes shared with many Americans, including issues like good governance, sensitiveness towards minorities, quality of democracy, respect to women and elderly etc. Paradoxically, this might become one of the channels through which at least a part of “Trans-Atlantic agenda” could be re-invigorated.

**Secondly**, the ongoing Europeanization matters especially for the young generations: their lives, their economic careers, their prospects, their everyday reality will be more and more connected with the political, economic and cultural territory of Europe. Besides their own countries, their political socialization will take place in the European Union – and thus, American inspirations, American ideas, and American projects that have been so relevant and formative for the “revolutionary generation” in 1989 and afterwards might become less significant.

**Thirdly**, there is an issue of the intensity of the contacts. The sooner the visa will be abolished and

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<sup>9</sup> Among the exceptions are events around upcoming presidential elections in the US. In fact, those media, journalists and analysts who pay attention to it, tend to believe that transatlantic links and US-EU cooperation might improve with the new American president.



a symmetric partnership will be installed, the better. It does not mean the removal of visa is a panacea and one cannot predict in how far this might influence the development of future relationships. But the persistence of the current status is counterproductive. We know from the surveys that only four percent of Slovaks have ever visited the U.S. (the highest number in the “old EU” is for the British – 46 percent, the lowest for Portuguese – 11 percent). Friendship and closeness is promoted and nurtured by frequent contacts and the current status is both embittering for the new EU and NATO member states and counterproductive for Americans as well.

## **PART TWO: INSTITUTIONS AND ACTORS PROMOTING U.S. – SLOVAK ROELATIONSHIPS AND TRANSATLANTIC AGENDA<sup>10</sup>**

### **3. EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION, U.S.-SLOVAKIA COOPERATION, AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

After the political change in 1998-1999, the key foreign policy and security goals of Slovakia were systematically supported by public diplomacy. As some of those goals, especially the NATO enlargement, have been also in accordance with the foreign policy agenda of then U.S. governments – both Clinton and Bush administration – programs and projects in this field have been supported and/or sponsored by both U.S.-based as well as Slovak institutions and organizations, including think-tanks and other NGOs.

#### **3.1. *U.S.-Slovakia Action Commission* (*U.S.-EU-Slovakia Action Commission*)**

In the time of its creation (Spring 2000), the **U.S.-Slovakia Action Commission (USSAC)** was one of the crucial tools to advance a bilateral agenda between the two countries. After gaining U.S. support for Slovakia’s membership in the OECD, and after the beginning of negotiations on major investment

of US Steel in Slovakia, the USSAC was formed as another powerful instrument of multilevel cooperation between the U.S. and Slovakia.

The concept has proven very useful in bilateral relations between the United States and Poland, but also in Romania (until 2000) and later in Bulgaria. In general, such commissions have been operating in the context of the countries’ quest for full integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures; in Slovakia, its goal was to assist the government in the reform process, while providing an independent platform for an exchange of views on relevant topics and solutions to relevant problems. The U.S.-Slovakia Action Commission (later renamed to **US-EU-Slovakia Action Commission**) consisted of three working groups – Business Conditions, Banking & Capital Formation, and Security & Foreign Policy.

The USSAC was an initiative of the **Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)** in Washington D.C.; the **Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA)** was CSIS’s counterpart organization in Slovakia. Under the leadership of George Handy, Director for International Commissions at CSIS, with the support by President Schuster, Prime Minister Dzurinda, the Commission was launched in March 2000 as a non-governmental forum bringing together Slovak and American leaders and experts to discuss areas of great concern in Slovakia’s continuing transformation. Slovak Embassy in Washington was instrumental in coordinating these efforts. Commission members included business leaders, policy experts, and scholars. Government officials also participated, in order to strengthen the private-public sector partnership, but they were not commission members, so as to ensure that they judge the commission’s recommendations objectively. The commission provided the participants with a unique atmosphere of candid exchange so that they can determine what priorities and policy approaches should be chosen in Slovakia’s reform process (discussions focused on recommendations for taxation, law enforcement, transparency, intellectual property rights, measures of banking industry that could contribute to

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<sup>10</sup> Michal Kiška, student of the University of London, who has been an intern at the Institute for Public Affairs in June 2007, collected some background materials for this part of study.

a greater influx of capital and investment in Slovakia etc.). The formal opening of the U.S.-Slovakia Action Commission took place in Bratislava in November 2000, and was co-chaired by Zbigniew Brzezinski of CSIS and Eugen Jurzyca, Director of the economic think-tank INEKO. Later, former Republican Senator William Roth, a legendary figure in the process of NATO enlargement, became the U.S. Co-Chair of the Commission.

The security element was one of the most important dimensions of USSAC's activities. Under the chairmanship of Janusz Bugajski, Director of the East European Studies Program of CSIS, Theodore E. Russell, former U.S. Ambassador to Slovakia, and Alexander Duleba, Director of the SFP, the Security and Foreign Policy Working Group outlined a proposal to better coordinate the different programs that bring Slovakia closer to joining NATO. It has also reviewed and approved a security "white paper" *Slovakia's Security and Foreign Policy Strategy* that enumerated a detailed list of security concerns on which Slovakia must focus over the next decade.<sup>11</sup> This policy paper outlined a strategic plan for Slovakia's security, emphasizing why Slovakia is now poised, politically, economically, and militarily, to become a member of NATO in the second round of enlargement scheduled.

The report received great attention due to its early release in Bratislava in May 2001 at a conference on NATO expansion where nine Central and East European countries reaffirmed their intentions for NATO membership. The government of Slovakia organized the conference and representatives of current NATO member countries attended it as well. Much of the discussion at the conference sur-

rounded Russia's desire to "veto" the enlargement process. "The CSIS Policy paper became a significant part of the debate when the Russian Embassy in Bratislava refuted its contents, specifically a section written about Russian organized criminality and efforts to subvert the NATO expansion process," wrote the *Washington Post*. "The Russian embassy placed letters at every desk at the conference repudiating the paper's statements".<sup>12</sup>

### 3.2. U.S.-Slovak Security and Foreign Policy Working Group

The program has continued and transformed itself into the **U.S.-Slovak Security and Foreign Policy Working Group**, a collaborative effort of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and Friends of Slovakia (FOS). The project conducted within New European Democracies Project at the CSIS "examines the challenges facing the Slovak Republic as the country works within European political, economic, and security structures. In working closely with Slovak government, NGO community, and policymakers, the project offers a forum for addressing important issues facing the country".<sup>13</sup>

In 2007, the program focused on visa issues. On March 5, CSIS, Friends of Slovakia and American Friends of the Czech Republic sponsored a successful Forum for Congressional staff on "The Impact of the New Visa Waiver Legislation on Central Europe".<sup>14</sup> The panelists discussed the status of proposed modernization and enlargement of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) and commented on the impact of expanding the VWP with particular reference to inclusion of US allies in Central Europe and

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<sup>11</sup> U.S.-Slovakia Action Commission: Security and Foreign Policy Working Group. Center for Strategic and International Studies, and Slovak Foreign Policy Association, *Slovakia's Security and Foreign Policy Strategy*, 2001. [www.csis.org/ee](http://www.csis.org/ee).

<sup>12</sup> *The Washington Post*, May 12, 2001. See also Steven Blank: Should NATO Invite the Baltic States? *Perspective*, Volume XII, No. 3, 2002, and Steven Blank: In Russia a Democracy and Does it Matter? *World Affairs*, Volume 167, Number 3 / Winter 2005.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.csis.org/nedp/projects/>

<sup>14</sup> The panel included Paul Rosenzweig, Acting Assistant Secretary for International Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, Mark Pekala, Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, Department of State and Michael Wyganowski, Executive Director, Center for European Policy Analysis. Janusz Bugajski, Director of the CSIS New European Democracies Project moderated the panel. The Forum was attended by a dozen Congressional staffers plus representatives from the Slovak, Czech, Hungarian and Polish Embassies.

pointed out the negative foreign policy implications of failure to do so.<sup>15</sup> The final agreement between the U.S. and Slovak governments on potential inclusion of Slovakia into the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), signed in March 2008, was welcomed also a success of public diplomacy.<sup>16</sup> In 2008, another area of common interest was energy security issue.<sup>17</sup>

CSIS continues to work on transatlantic agenda with special emphasis on new NATO member states within the project **America's New Allies**. According to its conclusions and recommendations, "to maintain dependable partners within the EU, the United States should focus greater attention on its new allies in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), who will be a guiding force in the continuing development of U.S.-EU relations and have generally exhibited a more pro-U.S. approach than many of their western European neighbors. (...) That being said, the United States must resist the temptation to focus its diplomatic efforts on bilateral agreements with those European countries in closest alignment to it, and instead use these dependable and durable partners among the CEE states to develop more predictable and productive relations with the EU for the sake of long-term stability. To accomplish this strategic objective, Washington needs to refocus the NATO alliance, ensure U.S.-EU complementarity,

jointly pursue the expansion of democratic systems, reward its new allies, intensify economic and social interchanges, promote military rebasing, improve public diplomacy, defuse any current or latent controversies, and more effectively engage emerging allies throughout Central and Eastern Europe."<sup>18</sup>

### 3.3. *New Atlantic Initiative*

According to its mission, the **New Atlantic Initiative (NAI)** was an international nonpartisan organization dedicated to revitalizing and expanding the Atlantic community of democracies. The NAI was launched in June 1996 following the Congress of Prague, where more than 300 politicians, scholars, and investors discussed "the new agenda for transatlantic relations." Though most of the politicians standing behind the NAI were conservatives, and the organization was a project of **American Enterprise Institute (AEI)** in Washington, the attractive idea of Euro-Atlantic integration has brought together people with different views (among the key patrons were not only Margaret Thatcher, Henry Kissinger, and George Schultz, but also Václav Havel, Helmut Schmidt, and Leszek Balcerowicz). Its executive directors, Jeffrey Gedmin (1996-2001) and Radek Sikorski (2002-2005), both resident scholars at the AEI, were known for their pro-Atlantic attitudes and after leaving the NAI, they

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<sup>15</sup> According to the FOS report from the Forum, the Central European participants considered the existing VWP as outdated: "U.S. relations with the countries of Central Europe liberated from Communism and now on a democratic path have been based on respect, gratitude and good will," emphasized the participants. "The CE countries have therefore supported U.S. policies, including our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, U.S. assistance is no longer provided or needed and CE participation in Iraq has brought them problems rather than benefits. As one of the panelists put it, the U.S.-CE relationship has lost its overarching *raison d'être*. Central European citizens see West European countries that have not supported U.S. policies as strongly as they have in the VWP, while they have difficulty traveling to the U.S. This has caused considerable resentment. With travel and study opportunities for Central Europeans now open within the EU and travel to the U.S. problematic, the urge of Central Europeans to visit the U.S. is declining - said one of the participants. And even if the opening the VWP to the countries of Central Europe will not dramatically alter the current public view of the US, it will improve relations." See <http://www.friendsofslovakia.org/>

<sup>16</sup> Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) was signed by U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Michael Chertoff and Slovak Minister of the Interior Robert Kaliňák on March 17, 2008, together with Hungarian Ambassador Ferenc Somogyi and Lithuanian Ambassador Audrius Bruzga, and after signing similar agreements with the Czech Republic, Estonia and Latvia. "I applaud Slovakia, Hungary and Lithuania for their leadership on these enhanced security measures, and I look forward to the day when their citizens can travel to the United States without a visa," said Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff."

<sup>17</sup> On May 15, 2008, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Friends of Slovakia (FOS), and American Friends of the Czech Republic (AFoCR) organized a roundtable entitled "Central European Energy Security Forum" with Douglas Hengel, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Energy from the Department of State, Ambassador Václav Bartuška, Ambassador-at-Large for Energy Security at the Czech Foreign Ministry, Wojciech Ponikiewski, Director of the Department of Foreign Economic Policy at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Slovak Ambassador to Washington, Rašislav Káčer.

<sup>18</sup> Janusz Bugajski and Ilona Teleki: *Atlantic Bridges. America's New European Allies*. Washington, Rowman & Littlefield/CSIS, 2006.



continued to work in favor of a closer cooperation between the Atlantic partners (Jeffrey Gedmin later became the director of Aspen Institute in Berlin and from 2007, he serves as the President of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty; Radek Sikorski served later as the Polish Minister of Defense, and from 2007, he is the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs).

The central objective of the NAI was “to strengthen Atlantic cooperation in the post-cold war world by bringing together Americans and Europeans to work toward common goals, including the reinvigoration of Atlantic institutions of political cooperation and consultation; the admission of Europe’s fledgling democracies into the institutions of Atlantic defense and European economic cooperation, notably NATO and the European Union; and the establishment of free trade between an enlarged European Union and the North American Free Trade Area as a complement to strengthening global free trade.”<sup>19</sup> The NAI also sponsored conferences, debates, and roundtable discussions in the U.S., Europe and elsewhere. (In 2005 the NAI was shut down and merged into the “European Studies” program at American Enterprise Institute.)

For Slovakia, at that time a relatively less known perspective partner and ally, the NAI was instrumental in helping to organize in April 2000 an important gathering in Bratislava, attended by politicians and scholars, to discuss the prospects of Euro-Atlantic integration. U.S. and European leaders who gathered in the Slovak capital for the New Atlantic Initiative (NAI) conference “The Future of Euro-Atlantic Integration: Chances and Obstacles” on April 28-30, pledged to support further NATO enlargement by

saying that “it will contribute to consolidating and solidifying democracy and a free-market economy in the former Soviet satellite states of Central and Eastern Europe.”<sup>20</sup> The co-organizers of the conference were the Bratislava-based Institute for Public Affairs, a public policy research think tank; the Bratislava Office of the U.S.-based German Marshall Fund; the Slovak Atlantic Commission; and the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>21</sup> In addition to the American participants, the conference was attended by: the prime ministers of Slovakia and Hungary; the foreign ministers of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Slovenia, and Slovakia; the state secretaries of the foreign affairs ministries of Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania; the Romanian defense minister; Central European ambassadors to the U.S. and NATO, members of parliaments; as well as NGO representatives from Slovakia and other countries. At that period, it was not an exaggeration when the Slovak journal *Mošty* concluded: “It was certainly the most important NATO-related event to occur in Slovakia since its creation in 1993.”<sup>22</sup>

### 3.4. *Friends of Slovakia*

While Slovaks in America have not been short of fraternal benefit societies, traditional cultural associations, churches and religious groups, they have been missing an organization of modern type that would promote US-Slovakia relationships in areas which are crucial for broader-based cooperation between allies and nations sharing similar values of freedom, democracy and a market economy. This gap was successfully closed by establishing **Friends of Slovakia (FOS)**, a non-profit organization of volunteers founded in 2001.<sup>23</sup> Its mission is to strengthen friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation

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<sup>19</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Atlantic\\_Initiative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Atlantic_Initiative)

<sup>20</sup> “It was important for NATO members to have a plan, a process, and a strategy,” said Jeffrey Gedmin. “Central Europeans are not shortsighted. If they see that NATO’s open door policy is only an empty slogan, they can get passive and disappointed.”

<sup>21</sup> Besides one of the NAI founder John O’Sullivan, several American scholars, senior fellows, and policy-makers attended the Bratislava conference. These included John Bolton, Karlyn Bowman, Joshua Muravchik, Michael Novak, and Richard Perle of the American Enterprise Institute; Ronald Asmus of the Council on Foreign Relations; Bruce Jackson and Julie Finley of the U.S. Committee on NATO; Ambassadors Daniel Fried and William Taft; Jeffrey Simon of the National Defense University; Walter Andrusyszyn of the U.S. Department of State; James Denton of Freedom House; Ian Brzezinski, a senior staff member of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Chris Rademaker, chief counsel of the U.S. House International Relations Committee; Cameron Munter of the National Security Council; and Daniel Mariaschin of B’nai B’rith International. For some of them, it was the first-ever visit to Slovakia.

<sup>22</sup> *Mošty*, 14, 2000.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.friendsofslovakia.org>.

between the United States and Slovakia. Friends of Slovakia seek to promote this cooperation in economic, business, political, security, cultural, educational and humanitarian fields and to improve mutual understanding between Slovak and American people. To achieve this purpose, Friends of Slovakia has set following goals: to educate the U.S. public about Slovakia, its history, its culture, and its numerous ties to the United States; to enhance the relationship between Slovakia and the United States, including promotion of increased cultural and economic exchanges between the countries; and to promote understanding and friendship between Americans and Slovaks.

According to Jan Surotchak, the then Chairman of the organization, “Friends of Slovakia was started with the idea that there is an increasing number of people all across the United States today who have ties to modern Slovakia, and who are willing and eager to commit time and resources to improve the relationship between the two countries. These are sometimes people who have Slovak roots, but there are many others who have no Slovak background, but have lived in Slovakia as Peace Corps volunteers, served as diplomats in Bratislava, came to Slovakia to open successful businesses, or work in the non-governmental sector. Friends set about to bring these people together to help improve relations between the countries in the areas of politics, business, and arts and culture.”<sup>24</sup>

There are three areas, on which Friends of Slovakia focus primarily. The first one is political ties. FOS seeks to promote a greater understanding of Slovakia and its domestic, foreign and security policies by America’s decision-makers. Primary areas of activity include building networks and increasing Slovakia’s visibility in the United States through a series of Roundtables on major topics of interest. The second area is economic ties: working with Slovak and American companies and entrepreneurs to explore and advance bilateral economic ties of trade and investment. The third area is academic, cultural and social ties: enabling Slovaks and Americans to share with each other the diverse artistic and cultural heritage of both countries. In this area, Friends of Slovakia brings young Slovak leaders to the United States through a summer Slovak Scholars program and promotes a variety of cultural exchanges, in cooperation with the Georgetown University, Washington DC.<sup>25</sup> Traditional gala dinners organized annually in Bratislava bring together policy makers and public figures, people from business, culture and academia, diplomats and journalists.<sup>26</sup>

FOS is planning a travel program from the U.S. to Slovakia, which will start in 2008. Some of the FOS delegations will be for professionals such as medical doctors, lawyers, accountants, engineers, etc., and others will be designed for people that want to travel to Slovakia, meet with some government officials, U.S. Embassy personnel and visit some of the major cities in Slovakia. The U.S. Embassy in

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<sup>24</sup> “Strong ties bind Slovaks living around the world.” Beata Balogová speaks with Jan Surotchak, FOS Chairman, *The Slovak Spectator*, Aug. 9, 2004.

<sup>25</sup> “We’ve had an excellent group of committed colleagues from the very start,” says Surotchak. “Among them were America’s first Ambassador to the Slovak Republic, Ted Russell; President of Tucker and Associates, William Tucker; Slovak Honorary Consul in Western Pennsylvania, Joseph Senko, among others. Nothing, however, would have come together for Friends without the leadership of former Slovak Ambassador to the US Martin Bútora, and we are happy to continue our relationship with his successor, Ambassador Rastislav Káčer. (...) We were extremely proud to support a long series of activities surrounding the opening of the new Slovak embassy in Washington in the summer of 2001. In addition, we have a successful ongoing series of roundtable discussions in partnership with the well-known Washington think-tank the Center for Strategic and International Studies. We organised a large gala dinner to celebrate Slovakia’s membership in NATO and to award prominent Slovak and American leaders with Madeleine Albright in Bratislava in 2002, and collected funds to help rebuild the damage of the floods in Slovakia in 2003.”

<sup>26</sup> The recent one, held in Bratislava on December 10, 2007, was devoted to Slovakia’s economic progress. As at previous dinners, Friends of Slovakia presented awards to honorees in three areas. The 2007 Politics/Diplomacy Award went to Ján Kubiš, Minister of Foreign Affairs; the Business/Economics Award was shared by Milan Filo and David Lohr. Mr. Filo is chairman and CEO of Eco-Invest and chairman of the supervisory board of five other companies employing over 10,000 Slovak citizens and exporting products of an annual value in excess of \$400 million euros. David Lohr is president of US Steel Košice, which, along with its subsidiaries, employs over 16,000 Slovaks and is one of the largest foreign investors in Slovakia. Dr. Branislav Lichardus, the first Slovak Ambassador to the U.S., received the Cultural Award for his work in the field of education. He is rector, School of Management, City University of Seattle, which enrolls some 1600 students on campuses in Bratislava and Trenčín. Newly-arrived U.S. Ambassador Vincent Obstnik and his wife, Anne Marie, attended the dinner, together with former Slovak President Michal Kováč and other politicians and diplomats.



Slovakia has agreed to work closely with FOS in putting the program together.

In Washington, Friends of Slovakia is cooperating with its partner, American Friends of the Czech Republic in organizing, together with Slovak and Czech Embassies, the annual *Freedom Lecture* at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.<sup>27</sup>

### 3.5. *Euro-Atlantic Center and Slovak Atlantic Commission*

If Friends of Slovakia is an organization oriented at prominent representatives of political, economic, security, academic and culture elites, the **Euro-Atlantic Center (EAC)** is an efficient platform advocating and promoting the Euro-Atlantic views and perspectives among students and young audiences. It was founded in 1999 as a non-profit NGO by students of Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (Central Slovakia) with the aim of raising public awareness of international affairs and security issues by fostering qualified debate and research related to Slovakia's role within the Euro-Atlantic environment. "EAC boasts a unique membership, which comprises exclusively students and young academics who have come together to broaden their knowledge of international and security policy," says the EAC in a brochure describing its activities ([www.eac.sk](http://www.eac.sk)).

By organizing seminars, round tables, and presentations and by publishing articles and research studies, the EAC strives to present the public a comprehensive picture of Slovakia's standing in regional and global developments. EAC contributes to the development of a network of individuals and institutions concerned with Slovakia's successful performance on the international stage. Among past

activities of EAC we can find conferences such as "Security Dialogue", "European Days '99", "Eurosec 2000 and 2001", "Slovakia for Europe - Europe for Slovakia", "The New Security Environment - Facing New Security Challenges".

In the premises of the Faculty of Political Science and International Affairs of Matej Bel University (FPVaMV UMB) in Banská Bystrica, the Euro-Atlantic Center organized a series of lectures and round tables under the title Foreign Policy Dialogues. The project aimed at "stimulating a qualified dialogue on the current issues of international politics and creating a venue for an open, yet critical discussion".

Furthermore, the Euro-Atlantic Center has been a part of several educational programs, like "Quo Vadis: Europa-America?", "Future and the Perspectives of NATO", "Istanbul Pan Atlantic Student Summit", "Slovak Testimony", "Slovakia to Ukraine: Building Bridges to Future Generations", "NATO and Security as a Necessary Part of the Slovak and Ukrainian Academic Studies" "Quo Vadis NATO?".

In 2007 and 2008, the EAC was the Slovak partner of the Aliante project aimed at inciting young generation (high school/grammar school students) "to be actively interested in the NATO, the activities of the Slovak Republic in the political and military structures of the Alliance and the tasks and mission of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic." By means of informal education it endeavors to increase the popularity of these topics, and "using a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical skills the Aliante contest makes students acquainted with values underpinning the North-Atlantic Alliance- democracy, partnership, dialogue and collective security."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Among the previous speakers were Madeleine Albright, Michael Novak, Adam Michnik, Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, Ivan Mikloš, Slovak Deputy Prime Minister. In November 2007, it was Alexandr Vondra, Czech Deputy Prime Minister and in November 2008 it will be Slovak Foreign Minister Ján Kubiš.

<sup>28</sup> "Aliante has gathered students across Europe and the United States to experience something truly exceptional and compete for an unparalleled prize to visit places they could never visit on their own. The Aliante competition is centered on the promotion of a greater understanding of the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization, security policy, and international relations. In 2007, the Aliante competition winners had a unique chance to tour the United States and visit attractive places such as the largest naval base of the US Navy in Norfolk, Virginia, the Nebraska National Guard training center, and one of the most modern and highly-secured bases of the US Air Force in Colorado Springs. In 2008, the winners will have an opportunity to visit the northernmost NATO base that lies beyond the Arctic Circle. (...) As the Aliante family has been rapidly growing, this year, exceptional students from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, the United States, the United Kingdom, and for the first time also Finland and Georgia, will compete for the prestigious prize." See <http://www.project-aliante.org/us/>

The EAC has also produced several publications (*Global Terrorism*; *Slovakia for Europe – Europe for Slovakia*; *The New Security Environment – Facing New Security Challenges*; *GLOBSEC: The Role of the Transatlantic Partnership in the Global Security Environment*). An illustrative example is the most recent books on Slovakia's position in transatlantic relations: after designing nine possible scenarios of relationships between the U.S. and European Union, the authors elaborate on possible role of Slovakia, helping the reader to better understand and think strategically on security issues.<sup>29</sup>

The EAC closely cooperates with the **Slovak Atlantic Commission (SAC)**, established in 1993. The SAC, a member of the Atlantic Treaty Association, was revived and strengthened by young leadership and vigor in 2004, and its current president Robert Vass was previously the head of the EAC.<sup>30</sup> They collaborated in organizing “National Security Table 1 and 2” and the international security conferences GLOBSEC 2005, 2006, 2007 with topics devoted to global security environment, terrorism, security situation in the Balkans. In November 2007, Slovak Atlantic Commission organized the GLOBSEC Express - Sending Message to the Balkans.<sup>31</sup>

In 2007, the EAC and the SAC organized an international seminar Democracy Building in Iraq, which involved members of the Iraqi Parliament, representatives of the Atlantic Club in Iraq, and students from Iraq.

On April 2-4, 2008, the representatives of the Slovak Atlantic Commission participated at the

Young Atlanticists Summit held in Bucharest during the last NATO Summit. On April 24, in cooperation with the U.S. Embassy, the Slovak Atlantic Commission brought the leadership of Slovak policy think-tanks together with a top NATO official via digital videoconference, as part of its series of post-Bucharest Summit briefings – the first of its kind in Europe. Jamie Shea, Director of Policy Planning in the Private Office of the Secretary General, spoke enthusiastically about the successes of the summit to a group of Slovak policy experts.

Both organizations cooperate with Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defense, as well as with main think tanks and NGOs working in the field of transatlantic relations.

The Slovak Atlantic Commission is publishing the regular *Euro-Atlantic Quarterly*, supported also by the NATO; it serves as a communication website bringing articles, analyses, information for a broadening audience ([www.eaq.sk](http://www.eaq.sk)).

In October 2005, during the first GLOBSEC international conference organized in Bratislava by the EAC and the SAC, together with the NATO Public Diplomacy Division under the title “The Role of the Transatlantic Partnership in the Global Security Environment”, Robert Vass, the newly elected head of the SAC, who at that time was still the chairman of the Euro-Atlantic Center, was complaining that while there were several NGOs in Slovakia dealing with security issues, “making an excellent job”, their weakness was “that the target groups of these organizations

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<sup>29</sup> Ivan Pešout, Lubomír Tokár, Mário Nicolini: *Pozícia Slovenska v transatlantických vzťahoch* [*The Position of Slovakia in Transatlantic Relations*]. Bratislava, EAC and Ministry of Defense 2008.

<sup>30</sup> Another young leader, Mário Nicolini, the founder of the EAC, has later become the adviser to the Slovak Minister of Defence.

<sup>31</sup> The young leaders of the 12 countries of the Balkans and the wider region who have participated on a unique youth project GLOBSEC Express train “Sending message to the Balkans” from Bratislava to Zagreb on 26th – 27th November 2007 have agreed that the gathering clearly shows the readiness of the young generation to take over responsibility for the common future of their region: “The young generation,” says the statement issued by the participants, “sees the Balkans as a vital part of the Euro-Atlantic security – that is why it cannot be left behind. The idea of “Europe whole and free” cannot be fully realized without the Balkan region included. Possible enlargement of NATO and EU enlargement as a driver of internal reforms and changes in the Balkans will have a positive impact on the candidate countries, as well as the whole region; therefore, the young generation appeals to the officials of their countries to look ahead for their future, leave the past behind and to step up to the challenges they have to face in their process of Euro-Atlantic integration.” We call for the Euro-Atlantic integration and cooperation of the whole Balkan region to promote the prosperity, peace and stability of this region, emphasized the participants.

and think-tanks rarely exceed the limited group of the security community. None of the NGOs really deeply touches the wide public, mainly there are small discussions groups, which do not really spread the ideas to the public, and the public stays unaware. During the PRENAME program these activities were coordinated and extensively supported to reach wide public, and the results were good. Without such a program it is really difficult to achieve those results. None of the NGO has an educational program, a program that would reach out far beyond the limits of the security community and educate the public about the transatlantic partnership, security policy. Here I see the very challenge... the task is to boost the discussion, to point on various questions of the security and defense policy, to provide sufficient comprehensive information and to assure a permanent discussion on those topics”.<sup>32</sup>

After three years of work and at the occasion of its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Slovak Atlantic Commission is announcing an ambitious continuation of its activities. “We are a value-based organization,” says a statement of the SAC published in spring 2008. “We believe in strong security community; we believe in transatlantic partnership and its values; we believe in international cooperation.” The position of the new president was offered to Ambassador Rašislav Káčer who is now completing his mission in Washington as the Slovak Ambassador to the U.S. In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the SAC is working on the preparation of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Security Conference GLOBSEC 2009.

### 3.6. *U.S. Think-Tanks, Academic and Research Centers and Resource Institutions*

An attentive reader could easily observe how important in this agenda – Slovakia’s Euro-Atlantic integration – were the involvement U.S. think-tanks, academic and research centers and resource institutions. Experts from places like Center for International and Strategic Studies,

American Enterprise Institute, Woodrow Wilson Center, Council on Foreign Relations, RAND Corporation, Hoover Institutions, Hudson Institute and others, scholars and teachers from Georgetown University, George Washington University, The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, Harvard University, Princeton University, Yale University, Stanford University, Berkeley University, New York University, New School for Social Research and several others, have been instrumental in three regards. They have been working on common projects with their Slovak and Central-European partners. They have been bringing CEE analysts, politicians, young leaders, and civic activists to the U.S., helping to increase the level of public interest in transatlantic agenda in general, and Central-Eastern integration into the Western political and security /ambit/zone/ in particular, supporting “internationalists” and “Atlanticists” among the U.S. policymakers, influencing the undecided and challenging the opponents (like, for instance, Michael Mandelbaum). On the other side of Atlantic, they have been serving not only as a knowledge base for the proponents of Euro-Atlantic integration, but some of them (like, for instance, an almost legendary figure of Zbigniew Brzezinski) as “eyes-openers” for highly positioned politicians.

While all of the previously mentioned institutions are rather “generalists” than “specialists” (i.e. they are dealing with a much broader groups of issues than just transatlantic cooperation), there has been one among them with a special status, namely **The German Marshall Fund of the United States of America**, with its branch operating in Bratislava. Officially, “GMF’s Bratislava office is its hub for activity in Central and Eastern Europe. Founded initially to work in the Visegrad countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary), Romania, and Bulgaria, its scope has gradually expanded further east, into the former Soviet Republics of Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine. The office (...) hosts and organizes conferences for leaders on democracy, security, and other regional issues, and

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<sup>32</sup> Robert Vass: *The role of NGO’s in the communication with public*. <http://www.globsec.sk/2005/page.php?doc=92>



works to support the democratic process in the region.”<sup>33</sup>

The special status is caused by the GMF’s involvement in transatlantic dialogue by “organizing seminal events that brought together politicians, experts, and practitioners from US, Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe”. One of them was a conference “A New Quest for Democracy” that took place the day before President George W. Bush met with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in the Slovak capital of Bratislava.<sup>34</sup>

The GMF also organizes the CEE component of the Marshall Memorial Fellowship program, which regularly brings to Slovakia groups of American leaders from various areas of public and private sphere that are meeting their partners in Slovakia, thus contributing to keeping the spirit of transatlantic dialogue.

Another important element in GMF activity is a cooperation on a well-known international public opinion survey *Transatlantic Trends* (with the Institute for Public Affairs, whose expert Olga Gyarfašová analyses and comments the findings in Slovakia) and presentation of the results in Bratislava – an event closely watched by policy makers, media, and general public. This creates a unique opportunity to discuss the transatlantic issues in Slovak media.

Last but not least, there is a personal factor that matters. Pavol Demeš, the head of the office, is not only former Slovak Minister of International Relations and former foreign policy advisor to the President of the Slovak Republic, and an internationally recognized NGO leader who has been involved in peaceful democratic changes

in Serbia in 2000 and Ukraine in 2004, but also a Slovak civic activist, former leader of Slovakia’s NGO community. Whereas several important Slovak NGOs and their protagonists have been similarly involved both in democratic changes in Slovakia and later in providing democratic assistance abroad, this has brought them all together into the common field where transatlantic agenda can be discussed and where, moreover, the values connected with the importance of Atlanticism can be promoted, nurtured, and communicated.

## 4. EMBASSIES

### 4.1. *Slovak Embassy in Washington*

After the political change in Slovakia in the fall 1998, the role of the **Slovak Embassy in Washington** was to gain the U.S. support for the foreign policy priorities of Slovakia (integration into the Western political, security and economic structures – NATO, EU, and OECD). To achieve these goals, the Embassy<sup>35</sup> has been involved in a very intensive public diplomacy, including bringing to the U.S. (to the capital, as well as to other states and cities), not only the politicians, but also leaders and protagonists from various fields of Slovak society – mayors, judges, NGO activists, artists, students, researchers and scientists, people from business and media, sportsmen and sportswomen etc. This has proved to be helpful in “transporting” the transatlantic agenda back home. While the key mission of the Embassy was, obviously, the coordination of various diplomatic and political activities, the uniqueness of the situation opened a space for a broad and colorful presentation of Slovak life,

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.gmfus.org/about/office.cfm?city=bratislava>

<sup>34</sup> In association with the Slovak Foreign Policy Association and the Institute for Public Affairs in Slovakia, the conference brought together a prestigious group of participants, including the speakers from Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, and other Eastern European countries who were joined by Carl Gershman, President of the National Endowment for Democracy; Bruce Jackson, President of the Project on Transitional Democracies; and Jacques Rupnik, Director of Studies at the Center for International Research, Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, France. On the next day, the leaders from Central and Eastern Europe were received by President Bush before his public speech in Bratislava.

<sup>35</sup> The co-author of this study, Martin Bútora, served as the Slovak Ambassador to the U.S. in 1999-2003.

Slovak culture and Slovak art.<sup>36</sup> In the following period, visits of representatives of businesses, firms and companies have continued and have been supported by the opening of Slovak Commercial & Tourist Office of the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in New York.

#### 4.2. U.S. Embassy in Bratislava

As for the activities of the **U.S. Embassy in Bratislava**, the level of events organized by the Embassy in all parts of Slovakia has increased in last 2-3 years, in part because of a dynamic Ambassador (it was Ambassador Rodolphe “Skip” Vallee) and leadership team, in part because the number of Slovak organizations requesting events and joint activities continues to grow. The most frequent areas are transformational diplomacy, Roma integration, cultural and educational exchange, youth outreach, business and investment, alternative energy, environmental issues. The Embassy works with all government and non-government agencies: ministries, national libraries and museums, universities and secondary schools, many NGOs and cultural organizations. According

to their own appreciation, the most successful events within last 2-3 years were “Ambassador’s trips to the interior of Slovakia, including his hockey games with young people; Higher Education Initiative, including Forum in June 2007; art exhibits hosted at the Embassy and covered by media; visit of Undersecretary of State Karen Hughes in October 2007; Roma cultural events; Sept 11 commemorations; events related to transformational diplomacy in Afghanistan, Cuba, Iraq, Kazakhstan.” The Embassy also believes that the image of US in the eyes of Slovak public would be improved “by the institution of the Visa Waiver Program for Slovak citizens, something both governments are working on.”

In spring 2008, the Embassy was active in communicating US foreign policy priorities through speeches of the new Ambassador Vincent Obsitnik. The Ambassador addressed audiences in Prešov, Banská Bystrica, and Bratislava. The theme of his speeches adequately reflects the current level of U.S. - Slovakia relationships. The Ambassador praised Slovak economic development, emphasizing the role of U.S. companies in the economic growth.<sup>37</sup> The

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<sup>36</sup> The functioning of the Slovak Embassy was noticed among important players in Washington, both among the Democrats and Republicans. Bruce Jackson, who served as the President of the bi-partisan U.S. Committee on NATO (from 1995-2002), a non-profit organization that promoted NATO expansion and strengthening the U.S.- European relationships and who was instrumental in securing U.S. Senate ratification of NATO expansion, emphasized the significance of the Embassy in Washington which “has powerfully and permanently influenced the direction of US and Euro-Atlantic policy,” becoming from the first days „the ethical and moral center of the Vilnius Group countries on this side of the Atlantic, in much the same way that President Havel has always been the moral organizing force in Europe. On countless evenings, the campaign for NATO invitation and ratification turned on the unfailingly wise and gracious counsel of the Ambassador” who “beyond the great work he has done in gaining the trust of American leadership and putting Slovakia on the map, together with his wife has succeeded in putting Slovakia in people’s hearts.” According to Zbigniew Brzezinski, former national security adviser to president Carter, a well-known political strategist and frequent commentator of foreign policy issues, “Ambassadors from big countries impact on Washington life because their countries have power and Washington respects power. Smaller countries have a very difficult time overcoming that handicap. But Slovakia was a remarkable exception because, in fact, it had two ambassadors, each endowed with charm and intelligence. Martin and Zora Butora represented Slovakia in Washington at a time of truly historic change in Slovakia’s position in the world. Each was an articulate, respected, and personally engaging representative of a country that within years of gaining its independence became a member of the world’s most powerful alliance, the ally of the world’s superpower, and soon also a member of the European Union. (...) To collaborate with them was not only productive but personally gratifying.” And Julie Finley, the current U.S. Ambassador to the OSCE, who was then the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Project on Transitional Democracies, an influential organizer and eloquent voice in the then foreign-policy establishment, adds: “For the past four years, this capital has been blessed” by the presence of Slovak diplomats and “working with them on the accession of Slovakia into NATO has been, definitely, one of the most pleasant experiences of my life.” See *Slovak Embassy Newsletter*, Spring 2003.

<sup>37</sup> “Slovakia is an excellent example of the linkage between stability, democracy and economic prosperity. Its stability and wide ranging economic reforms have led to a large inflow of foreign direct investment and corresponding strong economic growth – as high as 10.4 % last year. Virtually every other country in the world would love to say that its projected growth this year may “slow” to 7 percent. Joining the Euro zone next January, another step forward, will benefit both foreign and domestic investors, and contribute further to Slovakia’s growth and the prosperity of its people. I’m pleased that U.S. companies have been a significant factor in this growth. They have been among the earliest and most successful investors, investing over 3.8 billion dollars to date. This investment has resulted in the employment of 46,000 Slovak citizens. All in all, about 130 U.S. companies have a presence in Slovakia today. We look at the Slovak government as a partner in expanding business investment.” Vincent Obsitnik: Policy Speech for SFPA Bratislava, June 11, 2008. <http://slovakia.usembassy.gov/amb-speech.html>

main subject of his presentations was security challenges for Slovakia. He welcomed Slovak involvement in Afghanistan and the promise to increase Slovakia's troop numbers serving in Afghanistan from the current 69 to 280 by 2010. Ambassador Obsitnik also reminded the Slovak public of an important role of America in helping build the capacity of the Slovak armed forces both to protect this country and to enable its troops to conduct important peacekeeping missions abroad.<sup>38</sup> He did not hesitate to add that beyond troop contributions, nations, including Slovakia, should allow ISAF commanders to deploy troops in the most effective way possible.<sup>39</sup>

The U.S. Ambassador also touched the topics which both countries see from different perspectives, namely Kosovo and missile defense. After explaining the U.S. position on this issue and underlining the U.S.-EU Summit declaration stating that the U.S. and EU will continue to support the stability and security of Kosovo and its regional integration, and will assist Kosovo in its economic and institutional development, he asked Slovakia "to reach out to Serbia, encouraging them to adopt the path toward EU membership". On missile defense, Ambassador Obsitnik thanked to Czech and Polish allies "for their commitment to implementing missile defense within a shared NATO security framework" and reminded that a positive contribution of a missile defense system can be effective for defending Europe was acknowledged in NATO's Bucharest Summit Declaration.

With the new Ambassador who was born in Slovakia and is still fluent in the Slovak language, new horizons were open for cultivating cultural and his-

toric ties between Slovaks and Americans. In one of his previous position, he served as a member of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad. He worked to bring international attention to the plight of the 17th and 18th century Greek Catholic wooden churches of Slovakia and, through his leadership, two of the most endangered churches have been restored.<sup>40</sup>

Two events are emblematic for this new spirit. From February through June 2008, the Embassy-sponsored historic photo exhibit, "Slovakia, Slovaks and Connections on Historic Postcards and Photographs," was touring ten Slovak cities.<sup>41</sup> The historic photo project is the result of an international collaborative project in conserving photographs at the Slovak National Library, funded by the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles, and is traveling throughout Slovakia.<sup>42</sup> One themes of the exhibit is the Slovak-U.S. connection over the years - introducing "pioneers" of Slovak life in the U.S., explaining the social and sports life of Slovaks in America, USA, the contribution of Slovak-Americans to the beginning of Slovak cinematography and Slovak literature in the United States." Opening the exhibit in Vranov nad Topľou, Ambassador Obsitnik stated that as a Slovak-American, he is especially proud that Slovakia was chosen for this multi-year project: "It demonstrates the high reputation of Slovak institutions in this field," he said. He also added "the connections between Slovaks and Americans are very deep and very personal. As newcomers to the United States, Slovaks made contributions to all aspects of American life: industry, the arts, sports, science, innovation and politics."<sup>43</sup> Similar remarks to the crowds of library goers and media were expressed by other U.S. diplomats

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<sup>38</sup> "My government has provided nearly 100 million dollars in aid, since Slovak independence, to help modernize and professionalize the Slovak military." Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> According to him, forces should not be the subject of national "caveats," or limitations, that in effect tie the hands of the commanders: "Unfortunately today there are 80 caveats on national contributions among those countries with forces in Afghanistan, including Slovakia. Those caveats, which restrict military progress and success, should be lifted." Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> For his profile, see an interview with him: Beata Balogová: Diplomat with Slovak roots returns with more than ideas. *The Slovak Spectator*, No. 27, 2008.

<sup>41</sup> Košice, Prešov, Vranov nad Topľou, Martin, Banská Bystrica, Žilina, Trenčín, Piešťany, Nové Zámky, Bratislava.

<sup>42</sup> Jana Liptáková: Ties celebrated through art. *The Slovak Spectator*, No. 27, 2008.

<sup>43</sup> <http://slovakia.usembassy.gov/historic-us-slovak-photo-exhibit-opens-in-zilina-on-country-wide-tour-april8-2008.html>



who were present at the opening in various Slovak cities.<sup>44</sup>

Another reminiscence with an indirect political message was the display of the historic document of the original Pittsburgh Agreement of 1918 to Slovak public. At the Embassy-sponsored exhibit at Parliament on May 30, 2008, Speaker of Parliament Pavol Paška and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ján Kubiš spoke of the Agreement as the foundation for cooperation between the U.S. and Slovakia that exists today in the security, education and economic spheres. According to Ambassador Obsitnik, himself a Slovak-American, "The Pittsburgh Agreement represented a major step on the long road to independence for Slovakia and tangible proof of the support America has offered and offers to this day to Slovakia and its people."<sup>45</sup> On June 9, the document was placed at the Slovak National Museum in Bratislava. At the exhibit opening, Ambassador Obsitnik officially presented it to the Museum in the name of the American people.<sup>46</sup>

The Embassy also continued to work in dissemination of information on American life. The Embassy and the University Library of Comenius University in Bratislava have jointly operated InfoUSA Center since February 2005, when First Lady Laura Bush formally inaugurated the center. In its nearly three years of existence, the center has proved to be not only a home of learning, but also an effective venue for the Slovak public to learn about American life and culture. Among the many programs hosted at the center have been book and poster exhibits,

a series of American films, speaker programs and other events to promote a better understanding of the United States. A revised memorandum of understanding signed on January 22, 2008 continues this fruitful cooperation for a further three years.<sup>47</sup>

An InfoUSA study corner operates also at the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica. Having a strong commitment to enhancing cooperation and exchanges between U.S. and Slovak educational institutions, the Embassy is looking forward to cooperating with the Center for North American Studies, established on May 3, 2008, at the University of Economics in Bratislava.

Since April 2008, the Information Resource Center at Embassy Bratislava has distilled the best of the Web on the 2008 U.S. elections into a newsletter called "Election Focus 2008" that has proven to be a hit with young political leaders in Slovakia. <http://www.usainfo.sk/article.php?134>

In accordance with its emphasis on U.S. - Slovak economic cooperation, the Embassy is involved in several programs oriented at the improvements in economy. One of the recent inputs was a partnership with U.S. Steel Košice and the American Chamber of Commerce to hold a conference on hiring long-term unemployed in Prešov on May 20, 2008. A large percentage of unemployed workers are found in Roma communities in the East; American companies like Whirlpool and U.S. Steel have led the way with innovative hiring practices to coax these potential workers back into the workforce, allowing them

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<sup>44</sup> Information Officer Keith Hughes who opened the exhibit in Nové Zámky said: "As an American diplomat whose job is to increase exchanges between Slovaks and Americans, this exhibit is very special to me because it highlights the very deep and very personal relationship between Slovaks and Americans." (<http://slovakia.usembassy.gov/historic-us-slovak-photo-exhibit-opens-in-nove-zamky-on-country-wide-tour-may-19-2008.html>) General Services Officer Antje Weygandt who opened the exhibit in Trenčín noted: "It is no wonder that Americans who come to Slovakia feel quickly comfortable and at home here. Nearly every American who has lived in a big U.S. city has met a Slovak or Czech or other Central European person who was either a neighbor, became a good friend, or maybe even became a family member. The pictures and documents in this exhibit showcase the tremendous contributions Slovak immigrants have made to life in the U.S." (<http://slovakia.usembassy.gov/historic-us-slovak-photo-exhibit-opens-in-trencin-on-country-wide-tour-april-22-2008.html>)

<sup>45</sup> The Pittsburgh Agreement, signed on May 31, 1918 at a hotel in downtown Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, prepared the way for the creation of the state of Czechoslovakia. In October, 1918, the primary author of the agreement, Tomáš G. Masaryk, declared the independence of Czechoslovakia on the steps of Independence Hall in Philadelphia.

<sup>46</sup> <http://slovakia.usembassy.gov/original-pittsburgh-agreement-of-1918-on-view-to-slovak-public-until-september-june-9-2008.html>.

<sup>47</sup> <http://slovakia.usembassy.gov/bratislava-university-library-and-embassy-continue-infousa-cooperation-january-22-2008.html>.

to share in the benefits of Slovakia's growth. U.S. Steel, Whirlpool and other companies showcased their best practices in finding workers to a gathered audience of 130 business people, civic leaders and entrepreneurs who are also exploring ways to keep productivity up and labor costs reasonable.<sup>48</sup>

The U.S. Embassy has been also instrumental in supporting various initiatives and activities aimed at improving transatlantic relationships or mutual ties between America and Slovakia, like Young Slovak Professionals opening event, aimed at "forming a group and/or a discussion forum with an overarching goal to utilize experiences and skills acquired abroad in and for Slovakia, to network and to obtain more ideas about how to best utilize skills and experiences acquired abroad". (The group was formed under the title "Slovensko Naše" (Slovakia of Ours) and continues its work.)<sup>49</sup>

Even if the limited financial capacities do not allow the Embassy to run programs like America presents, Speakers Bureau (applied, for instance, in Poland), or to coordinate regular visits of American experts to Slovakia, the presented overview has shown that it is an important actor in cultivating Slovak-American relationships and issues of transatlantic agenda.

## 5. SLOVAK THINK-TANKS AND OTHER NGOS

An indispensable role in preserving transatlantic ties, nurturing "Atlanticist" agenda, developing

fruitful U.S. – Slovak collaboration, and taking inspiration from American experiences in dealing with public policy issues has been played by Slovak NGO (non-profit, voluntary) community, in Slovakia called also "the third sector". Here, the traditions of cooperation were established in early 90-ties and several of them are successfully continuing.<sup>50</sup>

There is wide range of topics and activities in public space and public arenas where we can trace a variety of "American lines of thinking" and "American ways of doing/acting" that have proved to be inspirational for the NGO community in Slovakia. Many think-tanks and public policy research institutes, human rights and advocacy organizations, watchdog groups and economic centers, environmental initiatives and foreign policy associations were able to find stimulation in the U.S. realities, in America's attempts, successes and achievements, but also disappointments.

Democratic transformation and consensually agreed "rules of the game"; civic participation and self-government; autonomous judiciary and law enforcement; foreign policy choices and security alternatives; economic and social reforms; sensitivity towards minorities and their integration into the public life; independent media; individual freedom and global responsibility – to name just a few – all those recurring themes vital for building a "good society" have been on the agenda of many influential Slovak NGOs.

According to Bulgarian analyst Ivan Kraštev it was the independent expert community, the think tanks

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<sup>48</sup> Stuart J. Ishimaru, a U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commissioner, journeyed to Prešov at the Embassy's invitation to share the U.S. perspective on how a concerted effort to hire minorities helped diversify the American labor force and boosted productivity.

<sup>49</sup> "Individuals and small NGOs can also make a difference," say Ambassador Obsitnik. "A great example is the newly-formed Slovensko Nase, which was started last year by a group of Slovaks who have studied and/or worked in the U.S. and have returned to Slovakia. Slovensko Nase seeks to share many of the positive business practices that the members picked up while in the U.S. To date they have held workshops to teach resume writing /job interviewing skills at several local universities and started a mentoring program to bring together company executives to share their experiences with top university students." Jana Shepperd-Zemlová: The Ambassadors speak: Defining our bilateral ties. *Connection*, July/August 2008.

<sup>50</sup> An overview of key Slovak NGOs that could be considered as „formative actors“ in various stages of democratic transformation is provided in Jozef Majchrák, Boris Strečanský and Martin Bútora: *Keď ľahostajnosť nie je odpoveď [When Indifference is Not an Answer. Civic Associating in Slovakia after the Fall of Communism]*. Bratislava, Institute for Public Affairs 2004. As an example of direct involvement of think-tanks in policy-making, including their expertise supporting pro-Atlantic orientation of Slovakia's foreign policy, see an overview in: Martin Bútora: *Pôsobenie think-tankov v slovenskej zahraničnej politike: genéza, výsledky, problémy [How Think-tanks Influenced Slovakia's Foreign Policy: Origins, Outcomes, Problems]*. Praha. Informační centrum Velvyslanectví USA 2005.



and policy centers that took over the liberal reforms agenda in many Central and Eastern European countries when reformist political parties lost elections and failed. Grigorij Mesežnikov shows that in Slovakia, where “population under the pressure of tough social circumstances gave political legitimacy to anti-reformist, or in some cases, even anti-liberal political forces,” the organized civil society helped to keep the reform agenda alive, “and pressured the ruling elites not to halt the transition completely.”<sup>51</sup> According to a foreign observer, “despite natural differences among Slovak NGOs, the overall third sector community seems to have bypassed the rest of the region’s traditional obstacle – a lack of involvement and participation of civic society in the decision-making process. This particular asset of well-developed, sophisticated NGOs can be partially attributed to the sharing of a common base of beliefs and due to the extensive network of cooperation established when the Slovak NGO community came together to help topple the Mečiar government in the “OK 98 Campaign” as well as to post-Mečiar ruling leadership and “its determination to respect and advocate democratic principles”.<sup>52</sup>

In spite of the fact that during the last two years think-tanks in Slovakia do play a less formative role, they are still vital resource for critical feedback of current policy-making, source of information for media and general public and important forum for enlightened public debate.

### 5.1. Slovak Foreign Policy Association

According to its mission, the **Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA)**, founded in 1993 by Magda Vašáryová<sup>53</sup>, is an open discussion forum on international affairs and the Slovak foreign policy. Its over-

all goal is to enable open space for free exchange of opinions and ideas on the scope of foreign policy. While it is not linked to any political party or movement, it has been actively supporting the integration of the Slovak Republic into the community of democratic countries and their political and security structures. The Association has non-profit status and has been very successful in spreading unbiased information among citizens of varied political affiliations. In 1995, the Research Center SFPA (RC SFPA) was founded as an integral part of the association. The Research Center has become the first independent, non-governmental think tank in the Slovak Republic that has specialized exclusively on international relations research.

SFPA organizes Jours Fixe Program (informal discussions on the current foreign-political discourse), Modern Foreign Policy Program (lectures on current foreign-political issues given by distinguished personalities from Slovakia and abroad). Since 1999, the SFPA secondary school debating clubs (Junior debating clubs) have been run in several Slovak towns. National Convention on the EU, now a project run by Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, was originally an idea conceived and a program founded by SFPA together with the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs and EuroInfo. SFPA publishes journals *Zahraničná politika*, *International Issues and Slovak Policy Affair*, *Studies on International Issues* and *The Year Book of Slovak Foreign Policy* and with its activities has considerably contributed to the formation of public debate on foreign policy issues. From the very beginning, it has been collaborating with U.S. think-tanks, and has been offering a prestigious forum for world leaders, both politicians and diplomats to speak out and discuss foreign policy and security affairs.

<sup>51</sup> Grigorij Mesežnikov: Role of Think Tanks in Economic Transition in Slovakia. In: *Supporting Change – Proceedings. Prague, March 29–30, 2007. A Workshop for Central European NGOs Active in Democracy Assistance and Promotion and Representatives of American and European Partner Organizations*. Organized by the U. S. Embassy in Prague, the Czech and Slovak Fulbright Commissions in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic. <http://www.fulbright.cz/download/supporting-change-day2.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> Sabina Crisen, Program Associate for East European Studies and former Fulbright Scholar to Romania: *A Closer Look at the Slovak NGO Community*. [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?doc\\_id=18785&fuseaction=topics.publications&group\\_id=7427&topic\\_id=1422](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?doc_id=18785&fuseaction=topics.publications&group_id=7427&topic_id=1422)

<sup>53</sup> Magda Vašáryová served as the Czechoslovak Ambassador to Austria (1990-1992), later became the Slovak Ambassador to Poland (2000-2005), and in 2005, was appointed as the State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Currently she is the member of Slovak Parliament.

## 5.2. Institute for Public Affairs

Institute for Public Affairs (IVO), is an independent public policy research institute founded in 1997.<sup>54</sup> Its mission is to analyze social, political, economic, foreign policy, legal and cultural issues of public interest; to conduct research on public policies and their consequences; to publish and disseminate widely the institute's findings; to make practical recommendations for improved government policy; to study, document and help to promote Slovakia's transition to a free, democratic and open society; to stimulate public debate on important issues through lectures, seminars, workshops and roundtable discussions; and to promote the active involvement of informed citizens in public life. In addition to the projects focused on domestic politics, public policies, and other issues IVO has a rich record in assignments and activities focused on transatlantic relations and transatlantic cooperation. Several projects have been supported by U.S.-based private foundations, including the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF).

In its early years IVO conducted a research-action project "Slovakia after Madrid" which was a part of an international project "Illuminating the Grey Zone. Insecurity and Uncertainty in Eastern Europe after NATO Enlargement".<sup>55</sup> In 1999 - 2000 it was the project "Slovakia after the Washington Summit", followed in 2001 by the project "EU Enlargement, NATO Enlargement", and "The Future of Transatlantic Relations," later on the project

"Values and Identities in the Enlargement of the Transatlantic Community: Case of Slovakia," and "The Future of the Enlarged NATO and European Union as Seen by Political Actors." All these projects have had strong dissemination dimension which included publications, public events, seminars, media outreach and others. IVO continued working on these topics also after Slovakia's joining EU and NATO and started to be very active in promoting democracy in other countries above all in Ukraine and Belarus.

When speaking about IVO's role in transatlantic relations promotion we have to mention participation on the GMF's annual research project "Transatlantic Trends." Since 2004 Slovakia has been included into this cross-national comparative survey. Annual analysis, disseminations and presentations of the findings not only bring the transatlantic agenda to the different audiences in Slovakia, but make this country more visible to the transatlantic community worldwide as well.<sup>56</sup>

Relevant contribution to the transatlantic profile of the Institute is the fact that its prominent analysts - Grigorij Mesežnikov and Olga Gyárfášová - have been Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows at the National Endowment of Democracy in Washington D.C. They collect a lot of knowledge and experience and made the Slovak public familiar with the role and importance of different institutions for critical thinking and democracy development.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Both co-authors are involved in IVO. Martin Bútora was the founder and the first President of IVO and serves as its Honorary President; Olga Gyárfášová is the Program Director of IVO and a member of its Board of Directors.

<sup>55</sup> See the critical overview and analysis of Slovakia's failure to join NATO during the times of Mečiar rule - Martin Bútora and František Šebej (eds): *Slovensko v šedej zone? Rozširovanie NATO, zlyhanie a perspektívy Slovenska* [Slovakia in the Grey Zone? NATO Enlargement, Slovakia's Failures and Perspectives]. Bratislava, Institute for Public Affairs 1998.

<sup>56</sup> For more details see following studies and articles: *Slovakia in the Transatlantic Context*. Bratislava, Institute for Public Affairs 2004; *Slovakia's Euro-Atlantic Integration - A Year After*. Bratislava, Institute for Public Affairs 2005; Olga Gyárfášová: Prinesú noví politickí lídri zlepšenie transatlantických vzťahov? [Will the new leaders bring improvement in transatlantic relations?], in: *Domino efekt*, 12.9.2007; Olga Gyárfášová: *Transatlantic Trends: What new democracies share, and don't*. blog.gmfus.org; Zora Bútorová and Olga Gyárfášová: Transatlantické trendy 2006: zotrvačnosť a zmena [Transatlantic Trends 2006: continuity and change], in: *Zahraničná politika* 2006/4; Olga Gyárfášová: Slovenská geopolitická bezstarostnosť [Slovak Geopolitical Carelessness], in: *Sme*, 7.9.2007; Olga Gyárfášová: Slovak's views of the United States: Room for improvement. *Connection*, July/August 2008.

<sup>57</sup> Gyárfášová Olga: Americké think tanky - zásobárne myšlienok, poradenstva a vplyvu [American think tanks - reservoirs of ideas, consultancy and influence], in: *Mošty*, 17.6.2003. A book by Zora Bútorová, another key analyst of IVO, called *Krehká sila* [Fragile Strength], portraying women leaders in Slovakia, was also partially inspired by American experiences. The author compiled and edited her book during her (unpaid) study stay at the National Endowment for Democracy.

### 5.3. *The Conservative Institute of Milan* *Rastislav Štefánik*

Founded in 1999, **The M. R. Štefánik Conservative Institute (CI)** wants to contribute to the creation of a conservative community and the cultivation of conservative opinions. According to the mission of this conservatively orientated think-tank, “the main goal of the Institute is to help create a social atmosphere that will allow the perception and wide acceptance of conservative attitudes.” Contrary to some other think-tanks, “the activities of the CI are not oriented only towards one sphere of public life or society. The common denominator of the activities performed by the CI is their value definition i.e. conservative view on society and a liberal approach to economy.”

Activities of CI are targeted at the economy, social policy, home and foreign policies, regional policy, civic society, battle against corruption and support of culture and arts. The Institute organizes conferences, seminars and debates clubs, analyses events in society and economy, issues thematic brochures and publications. Two last examples are a conference on value-based foreign policy, organized in June 2008, and a book *Na obranu slobodného trhu [In defence of Free Market]*, published in 2007, which is a series of lectures “by respected pro-market personalities” within the project “Conservative Economic Quarterly Lecture Series.”

A standard part of its agenda is relations between Europe and America, relations between Slovakia and the U.S., the activities and performance of United States in international arena policy and the underlying values of U.S. involvement. Due to its efforts, Slovak audience has got acquainted with at least some of the prominent figures of conservative thinking of contemporary America. While most of the authors and experts of the Institute are rather skeptical or critical towards the deepening of the integration within the European Union, towards its obsolete model of welfare state, towards its bureaucratic structures, its inability and/or unwillingness to contribute to burden sharing of military expenditures etc. – they are, in accordance with other conservative authorities in America and elsewhere, keen supporters of American concept of liberty, individual rights and free market. According to their

own words, “the CI bases its activities mainly on ideas constituting the source of Anglo-American conservatism. The principles of society arrangement supported by the CI are in fact implemented more in the U.S., with the American emphasis on the individual freedom and responsibility than in the continental Europe, which has more paternalistic and socialist tendencies.”

The CI has launched a project “American Liberty Scheme”. Within it, the CI supports the trustworthy foreign policy of the Slovak Republic as well as the strategic partnership between Europe and America. For the CI, “it is of vital importance to help eliminate false myths about the United States remaining in minds of the part of Slovak common public” (for an overview of these activities, please see a specialized website [USAinfo.sk](http://USAinfo.sk)).

### 5.4. *Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs*

Though the **Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs (CENAA)** was created only in January 2003 (in cooperation with Foundation of 21st Century), it is now a well-established NGO, known in the Slovak as well as foreign security environment. Its aim was to enlarge the security community in Slovakia and to support the accession process of Slovakia into NATO and EU. The aim of CENAA was to become active within the activities and projects in the field of foreign and security policy in the last phase of pre-accession processes of Slovakia and to upkeep those questions topical also after the accession into NATO and EU. After accession of Slovakia into the EU and NATO, CENAA is taking advantage of know-how from pre-accession processes into EU and NATO, especially in relation to the countries of Southeastern Europe, supporting the civil-military relations and professional independent platform in the CIS countries, taking part in the projects and activities within the EU and NATO, supporting the discussion about security issues in Slovakia, educating the broader public in the foreign and security and transatlantic issues.

The CENAA activities are divided into six programs: Transition, Transatlantic Relations and Europe, Strategic Regions, Security and Defense Policy, Panorama of Global Security Environment



and Summer School for Young Professionals. Each program covers a wide variety of research projects, training and education activities, conferences, workshops and publication activities with local and international partners involved.

The Centre plays an active role in strategic discussion in Slovakia and within the international security community. The fourth edition of the Centre's seminal work, *The Panorama of Global Security Environment 2006-2007*, was published at the end of November 2007. From October 30 to November 3, 2008, the Centre's Executive Director Róbert Ondrejcsák together with Ol'ga Gyárfášová, Program Director of Institute for Public Affairs and Ivo Samson, security expert from the SFPA, teamed up on their joint-project „Rising of public awareness in Ukraine: experience of Slovakia“.<sup>58</sup>

On April 4 and 5, 2008, CENAA organized The Second Slovak Strategic Forum, titled “Frozen Conflict or Strategic Partnership? Strategies and Missions of EU and NATO”, with experts from Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia and the United States. NATO Public Diplomacy Division and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation supported the Forum. Also, the Summer School for Young Professionals 2008 takes place on June 28 through July 6, 2008, at the National Academy of Defense (NAD) in Liptovský Mikuláš, Slovakia and in Uzhorod, Ukraine.<sup>59</sup>

### 5.5. Public Policy Institute

A dynamic newcomer in this community of think-tanks and action-tanks is the Slovak branch of **Public Policy Institute**, established in 2006 in London as an initiative of young people who studied or worked in Anglo-Saxon countries. Under the title “The Central & Eastern European Innovative Public Policy Think Tank”, they want to contribute to sustainable development of Central Europe and to

deepen democratization by conducting analyses and independent research, authoring public policy conceptions and solutions, and offering a platform for public debates.<sup>60</sup> In Slovakia, PPI concentrates on “initiatives” in the fields of university education, culture, and foreign policy. It also serves as a democracy watchdog. Besides organizing lectures and discussions on foreign policy topics, the PPI also publishes a *Foreign Policy Newsletter*, informing about important articles and studies from America and Europe. Public Policy Institute orients itself at students and young people (16-26 years old) whom they see as a “potential for future growth of Slovakia and the whole region”.

### 5.6. American Inspirations in Other NGOs

On the conservative side, the advocacy of freedom, free market, private ownership, limited government, the fight against “anti-Americanism” (as well as criticism of “political correctness,” “positive discrimination,” “feminism,” “environmentalism,” “anti-globalism” etc) belong to standard agenda of organizations like Práve Spektrum (Right Spectrum - [www.prave-spektrum.sk](http://www.prave-spektrum.sk)) or Institute for a Free Society ([www.isloboda.sk](http://www.isloboda.sk)), mainly oriented at students and young people. A group of young activists has also founded Konzervatívny klub Ronaldy Reagana (Ronald Reagan Conservative Club) that avows itself to the legacy of former President Reagan, organizing seminars and discussion devoted to his ideas and politics.

Another youth organization, Mladí Liberáli (Young Liberals - [www.mladiliberali.sk](http://www.mladiliberali.sk)) supports pro-market ideas in economic issues and pro-liberal attitudes in life-style questions.

U.S. experiences and practice, American ideas and leaders have been also a rich source of inspiration for NGOs confessing liberal values – for civic organizations aimed at democracy education, for hu-

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<sup>58</sup> Seminars and trainings for Ukrainian representatives have been held not only in Kyiv, but also in Odessa, Simferopol, and Dnipropetrovsk, cities with low support for Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine. CENAA will prepare a joint publication in Ukrainian language about Slovak experiences from Euro-Atlantic integration and security sector reform.

<sup>59</sup> Summer school is intended for master and doctoral level students of political science and/or international relations who are interested in the foreign and security policy issues. Around 25 students will come from Central Europe, South Eastern Europe and Ukraine.

<sup>60</sup> <http://thinktank.publicpi.eu/>

man rights and anti-racists groups, women organizations, watch-dog organizations and others.

### 5.7. *Economic Think-Tanks & Research Centers, Economic Educational NGOs*

“The biggest success of civil society in the economic transitions,” writes Grigorij Mesežnikov, “was rescuing the agenda of socioeconomic reforms. The actors of this rescue operation were independent policy institutes, think tanks, and experts. After the elections of 1992, pro-reform political forces were severely defeated by nationalist and populist parties, on the wave of the population’s disagreement with profound systemic changes, especially in the economy. The Slovak antireform forces were authoritarian and not liberal in the political sense, using non-democratic methods. They ousted the proponents of the reform course from the state administration, and it was civil society that offered these people safe harbor in think tanks and analytical centers.”

“Experts working in these organizations monitored and analyzed, publicized their analytical output and participated in the public debate on the overall state of economic transition,” continues Mesežnikov. “Their role at the time was not simply to keep the reform alive; they were also the authors and advocates of economic reforms. Think tanks prepared the reform strategies in particular sectors of the economy, and shaped the public debate on reforms, persuading the public that reform measures were necessary, generating additional support for them from the opinion-making community, and eliciting support among politicians for continuing economic transformation, which was a very important role. The second success of civil society in economic transition was their direct contribution to this process. When reformist political forces succeeded in returning to power, they invited people from think tanks, including economic ones, to be

the implementers of reform strategies as state officials.”

Indeed, continues Mesežnikov, “the whole story of the Slovak “reform tiger”, the champion of economic reforms in Central Europe, is a combination of the will of political elites to continue the reform process with the determination of civil society to generate reform strategies and reform practitioners, to educate the population about reforms, and to monitor the process of immediate reform implementation.”<sup>61</sup>

#### 5.7.1. M.E.S.A. 10 – Center for Economic and Social Analyses

The main aim of **M.E.S.A. 10** – a center for economic and social analyses – is to support independent market economy and principles such as free competition, equality of opportunities, independent enterprises, inviolability of private property, limited competencies of the state, openness of economy and separation of economic and political powers.<sup>62</sup>

According to its mission, M.E.S.A. 10 considers the following points to be the essential prerequisites of successful economic transformation and healthy economic development: - effective institutional organization of society based on respect and protection of values and principles stated above; - creation and rigorous exaction of rules of the game that protect these values and principles; - influence public opinion with the aim to advocate these values in the society.

The history of this think-tank reflects the history of Slovakia’s economic and political reforms. It was founded in 1992 by well-known politicians (almost all of them were economists) who belonged to first Slovak and Czechoslovak reform governments after the fall of communism.<sup>63</sup> In the years 1992 – 1998, M.E.S.A. 10 concentrated on defending the values

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<sup>61</sup> Grigorij Mesežnikov: Role of Think Tanks in Economic Transition in Slovakia. <http://www.ivo.sk/5147/sk/publicistika/role-of-think-tanks-in-economic-transition-in-slovakia>

<sup>62</sup> <http://www.mesa10.sk>

<sup>63</sup> The founders were Pavol Hofman, Jozef Kučerák, František Šebej, Mikuláš Dzurinda, Ján Langoš, Anton Vavro, Ivan Mikloš, Gabriel Palacka, Pavol Kinšes, Anton Dančo.

of market economy and inevitability of reforms of banking system, judiciary, public finances and public administration. It published organized public discussions (it created Slovak Economic Forum, an informal association of several think-tanks, academic institutions, NGOs, and partners from media), published books and a monthly periodical *Slovak Monthly Report*, worked on alternative models of economic policies. It criticized the method of privatization through direct sales to owners that were designed beforehand by Mečiar government, which was not transparent and was extremely disadvantageous for the state. Legal status of the company was changed in 1997, when M.E.S.A. 10 became a civic association.<sup>64</sup> In the following period (1998 – 2006), several key actors of M.E.S.A. 10 left it and joined the government, working in areas of economy, public finance and decentralization. One of the founding members, Mikuláš Dzurinda, a dedicated Atlanticist, became the Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic for the period 1998-2006, and another founding member, Ivan Mikloš, became not only Deputy Prime Minister responsible for economic reform, but also a well-known face of Slovakia's economic successes in America and EU countries.

At the same time, the think-tank continued to prepare concept materials, employing new young analysts who created a core of the new team.<sup>65</sup> In the period 2006 – 2010, besides working on issues of knowledge economy, M.E.S.A. 10 incorporated in its agenda consultation and implementation of Slovak reform experiences in other EU states, transition countries and future candidates for democratic changes.<sup>66</sup>

An illustrative example of M.E.S.A. 10's activity abroad is projects in Ukraine. "Support of Building

Local Democracy in Ukraine" was oriented at transformation and democratization of society in Ukraine.<sup>67</sup> The project was based on Slovak experience but used also the experience of other transition countries, where it had been proved that strong and pragmatic self-government is not only a guarantee of democracy and important partner in the public administration reform but also significant state representative when solving economic problems. It was conducted with the assistance of local self-government and Association of Ukrainian Cities and Communities and in cooperation with Research Triangle Institute, a major American research institute, "dedicated to improving the human condition by turning knowledge into practice"<sup>68</sup>. In 2008, M.E.S.A. 10 is realizing the project "Support of Competitiveness of Cross-border Regions in Ukraine under the Conditions of Market Economy", conducted in cooperation with the Kyiv-based Institute for Budgetary and Socio-Economic Research, and supported by official Slovak Aid. Both institutes have also launched a project titled "Support for Fiscal Decentralization in Ukraine through the East-East: Partnership beyond Borders Program" funded by the International Renaissance Foundation.

In cooperation with Pontis Foundation in Bratislava and Stockholm-based Christian Democratic International Centre, M.E.S.A 10 also prepared a policy paper on Cuba, advocating domestic dialogue in Cuba and a new EU strategy towards Cuba.

### 5.7.2. INEKO - Institute for Economic and Social Reforms

A renowned economic think-tank, **INEKO (Institute for Economic and Social Reforms)** was established

<sup>64</sup> Viktor Nižňanský, later head of M.E.S.A. 10, was among the founding members of this civic association. In 2006, after completing his job as the government plenipotentiary for public administration reform and state decentralization, he returned to M.E.S.A. 10 and became its President.

<sup>65</sup> Among them were Marek Jakoby, Peter Pažitný, Jana Červenáková, Olga Reptová, Jaroslav Pilát, Karol Morvay and Martin Valentovič.

<sup>66</sup> Milan Ježovica, former foreign policy adviser to Prime Minister Dzurinda, joined M.E.S.A. 10 in 2006, promoting "Atlantic" topics in foreign policy thinking and acting of the think-tank.

<sup>67</sup> Viktor Nižňanský – Richard Bodo: *Local democracy in Ukraine. Summary of findings, theses and ideas to support local democracy in Ukraine*. Bratislava, M.E.S.A. 10, Center for Economic and Social Analyses 2007. Local democracy in Ukraine: Summary of findings, theses and ideas to support local democracy in Ukraine. <http://www.rti.org/publications.cfm?nav=369>

<sup>68</sup> "With projects in more than 40 countries and a staff of more than 2,600, Research Triangle Institute offers innovative research and technical solutions to governments and businesses worldwide." Its mission is "to improve the human condition by turning knowledge into practice." <http://www.rti.org/page.cfm?nav=6>



in 1999 “to support economic and social reforms which aim to remove barriers to the long-term positive development of the Slovak economy and society.”<sup>69</sup> “Wide-reaching changes brought about by industrial revolution, democratization, globalization and informatization have hit our region in the last few decades,” writes INEKO in its mission statement. “Our society is unable to cope in this world with the rules and values valid for thousands of years any more – yet it should not ignore them either. For instance, there was no need to take care of the elderly through the first or second pillars of the pension system a thousand years ago. The seniors’ relatives provided the care reliably instead. No doubt that the relatives’ role is important today as well, yet it needs to be combined with the new schemes that would take in account changing conditions such as rising migration, and that would be able to take a good care of an increasing number of people who are not tied to small communities anymore. Hence the main mission of INEKO: to search for an optimal speed and scale of an “upgrade” of society’s operating system, its ethics code.”

One of the most creative and widely appreciated initiatives of the Institute is “HESO (Evaluation of Economic and Social Measures) Project”, which creates a platform, where independent economists, analysts, journalists, academics, people from business community, representatives of trade unions, employers’ associations and NGOs express their opinions on quality and importance of proposed and passed economic and social measures of legislature, executive power, as well as on decisions of public institutions on a quarterly basis.<sup>70</sup> The project was created with the aim “to push forward the economic and social transformation, to influence public awareness and to increase public acceptance of measures and policies, that speed up transformation toward a democratic, transparent political system buttressed by civil society and competitive market economy and lead to life quality improvements from a long-term perspective.”

Similar to other Slovak think-tanks and NGOs, INEKO operates also abroad. The project called “Transfer of Slovak Economic Reform Know-How to Ukraine” aimed at **contributing to faster economic growth and poverty reduction of Ukraine through improved economic reform policy-making**. In cooperation with the Kyiv-based The International Centre for Policy Studies, the experiences of Slovakia and other V4 countries in providing experts’ policy feedback to both public and to decision-makers were used.<sup>71</sup> The goal of the project “Creating Reform Coalition from Business, NGO and Media Leaders in Serbia” was **to improve the efficiency of Serbian labor market and quality of its business environment** as key elements for raising the country’s economic growth and reducing its poverty. By establishing a reform alliance consisting of business leaders, think-tank experts and journalists who will monitor and comment on labor market and business climate reforms on a regular basis, a more effective push on government can be created to change legislation towards a more economic growth- and employment-friendly environment.<sup>72</sup>

The findings and ideas of Eugen Jurzyca, the director of INEKO (an alumni of a scholarship stay at Georgetown University, who was also active in opening of U.S.-Slovakia Action Commission), and of his team, are frequently quoted in media and help to cultivate economic thinking in Slovakia.<sup>73</sup>

### 5.7.3. Hayek Foundation

Hayek Foundation is an independent, non-political and non-profit organization founded in 1991 in Bratislava by a group of Slovak economists. The mission of the foundation is to offer practical innovative proposals of the market solutions to the economic and social problems, disseminate and promote ideas of the classic liberalism in the Slovak Republic, be a platform for academic discussions among scholars as well as broader public and

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<sup>69</sup> <http://www.ineko.sk/about/ineko-institute-for-economic-and-social-reforms>

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.ineko.sk/articles/heso-project>

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.ineko.sk/articles/transfer-of-slovak-economic-reform-know-how-to-ukraine>

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.ineko.sk/articles/project-serbia>

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.ineko.sk/media/medialne-vystupy>

develop basic liberal ideas and values in the Slovak Republic. Fundamental liberal values, which the foundation endeavors to promote are free choice of every individual and his/her responsibility, market economy, minimalization of state interventions, cutting down the taxes and the right of every individual for life, liberty and property. In 2004 Hayek Foundation was awarded in the USA by prestigious Templeton Freedom Award for Institute Excellence in Promoting Liberty.

#### 5.7.4. Slovak Governance Institute

According to its webpage, **Slovak Governance Institute (SGI)**, a non-profit, non-partisan civic association, was spun off from INEKO in October 2001 to create an NGO with a clear focus on good governance and public policy. SGI's mission is "to initiate and promote the search for solutions to improve the process of making and implementing decisions on the allocation of public resources to meet the society's needs to ensure good, accessible, transparent and effective public services for the citizens of the Slovak Republic." Their projects are oriented at better governance in public sector and education; they also focused on issues like corruption, transparency in public sector or e-government.<sup>74</sup>

#### 5.7.5. INESS – Institute of Economic and Social Studies

A relatively new actor on the think-tank scene, **INESS - Institute of Economic and Social Studies**, has started its activities in Bratislava on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006. The think tank monitors the functioning and financing of the public sector, evaluates the effects of the legislative changes on the economy and society and comments on current economic and social issues: "Our goal is to broaden public awareness of the principles of functioning of market mechanisms, the effects of state interventions and their impact on the society and everyday life," says INESS in its mission statement. "The priority areas of include taxation and contributions to the

state budget, public healthcare system, monetary policy, issues related to the membership in the EU, government regulation, and property rights."

INESS sees as one of its most significant product an "**Analysis of the Social System in Slovakia**" and "**Proposals for Solving the Major Drawbacks**." The think-tank issues a monthly newsletter *Market Finesse*. INESS is also a member of Stockholm Network (the leading pan-European think-tank and market-oriented network).

Besides its regular analyses, studies, presentations at conferences, educational activities, frequent comments on current economic and social issues in media, INESS has gained popularity due to its project "Price of the State."<sup>75</sup> The goal of the project launched in December 2006 is "to improve the access to information on public finance, especially its size and proportions, for students, journalists and general public in a sphere of public finance." According to INESS, the information on revenues and expenditures of general government are dispersed, unclear and published at different locations throughout the Internet. The output of the project is a new internet portal<sup>76</sup>, which gathers the accurate and actual information on particular components of public finance: "Interactive functionality of the web page assist users in learning about the size and various uses of general government resources and track its changes in time. The structure of public expenditures are visualized in the form of poster „Vesmír verejných výdavkov“ (A Universe of Public Expenditures)" INESS has distributed the poster to high schools and universities together with an instruction CD ROM. "The main purpose of the portal is to inform, not to provide political evaluation," they say. Educated and better-informed students and general public are considered to be necessary assumptions of future development of able and active society.

While INESS is emphasizing its independence and non-partisanship, it openly declares its closeness to

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<sup>74</sup> <http://www.governance.sk/index.php?id=436>

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.iness.sk/modules.php?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=7>

<sup>76</sup> [www.cenastatu.sk](http://www.cenastatu.sk)



American experience, namely to Congressman Ron Paul. The former Presidential candidate visited INESS in 2007, finding there a group of scholars sympathetic to his reluctance to government spending. In its analyses, INESS scholars frequently quote U.S. literature, especially that of libertarian way of thinking, and they proudly refer to American inspiration in their studies of social system, of the price of the state as well as their research on “healthy profits” in health care.<sup>77</sup>

#### 5.7.6. Health Policy Institute

Established in 2005, as a response “to the backdrop of growing medical care costs driven by high expectations of citizens, ageing of the population, changing structure of illnesses and technological advances,” the mission of this young dynamic institution, well-known in Slovakia, but also frequently invited to advice the policymakers in other Central European countries, is to promote values which support financially sustainable health systems responding flexibly to the needs of the population, achieving a higher efficiency in the provision of health services, as well as to promote client-oriented approach to the insured and patients” ([www.hpi.sk](http://www.hpi.sk)). While the analysts of the HPI value the principle of solidarity, they also understand health as an individual asset and support health policies, which motivate citizens to improve their own health. They support the highest possible decentralization of decision-making and all market mechanisms in the health sector that are more efficient than state intervention.

Many of those ideas and principles are reflected in their monthly *Newsletter on Health Policy*.

#### 5.7.7. Junior Achievement Slovensko – Mládež pre budúcnosť

A nonprofit educational organization, a partner of Junior Achievement Worldwide, and a member of **Junior Achievement - Young Enterprise Europe**, teaches enterprise, entrepreneurship, and “economic literacy”, focusing on the role of business in the economy and the relevance of education in the

workplace. The Junior Achievement has its roots in America (it was established there in 1919) and after the fall of communism, it was also active in Slovakia, with the help of famous entrepreneur Tomáš Baťa who originally worked in Czechoslovakia, and who later became honorary president of JAW. In the academic year 2007/2008, 16 thousands of Slovak students are involved in the program and in June 2008, the overall number of alumni has reached 155 thousands (<http://www.jasr.sk/show-doc.do?docid=103>)

#### 5.7.8. The Michael Bosák Society

**The Michael Bosák Society** came into existence in 1999 at the 130th Anniversary of his birth (<http://www.bosak.sk/en/index.html>). Michael Bosák left Slovakia at the end of the 19th century for Americas to seek happiness and opportunity. Through his efforts, skill and business acumen he was successful beyond measure and became a well-known celebrity in Slovak history. During World War I, he organized collections to help Slovakia. He was also one of the signatories of famous Pittsburgh Agreement preceding the creation of Czecho-Slovakia. He served as the President of the First National Bank and his signature was used on a ten-dollar bank note. During his life he built banks, schools and churches, leaving behind a legacy of lasting values for future generations.

The Society has published books and organized exhibitions devoted to life of this unusual personality. It has also created a Memorial Room of Michael Bosák in the school in his native village, which was constructed with his financial support in 1925. Its current main activity is the organization of a yearly competition for secondary business and economics students in Slovakia for the Michael Bosák Prize. The most recent one was announced on February 2008.

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It should be added – though this is not a subject of our study – that the activities of many efficient and well-known NGOs in the arena of democracy, civil society, and good governance have been supported

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<sup>77</sup> Juraj Karpíš – Radovan Ďurana – Richard Ďurana: *Zdravý zisk [Healthy Profit]*. Bratislava, INESS 2007.

by American public and private actors, from US-AID program to National Endowment for Democracy, International Republican Institute, National Democratic Institute, Freedom House, Open Society Institute to Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe (some of the schemes they have developed are still running).

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And even if think-tanks and related institutions have lower significance in shaping public policies as it was during the previous decade, when they were among the key “agents of change,” serving as catalysts for ideas and actions, designers and promoters of transition policies – they are still fulfilling their role, described so eloquently by many authors and summarized by Jiří Schneider<sup>78</sup>, starting from agenda setting to providing feedback and policy evaluation, serving as a source of information for media and general public, exercising conceptual thinking, creating of multidisciplinary network of experts, offering policy recommendations, helping to articulate public interest and to contributing to the quality of public debate. They still “provide an organizational link and communication bridge between their different audiences”.

Having said that, one has also to notice serious problems of sustainability of this part of the non-profit sector in Slovakia connected with. Boris Strečanský, who recently co-authored a research on the NGOs’ influence on decision-making processes in Visegrad countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia), speaks of “two different interpretations of the 1989-2008 period regarding the role of NGOs. The first scheme states that “thanks to the support of Western countries, especially American private foundations (but also U.S. and EU public sources), it was possible to plant and husband a seed of civic participation and social capital in Slovakia, a process that NGOs contributed to as well.” However, there is also a second interpretation stating “that this seed did not

– despite the support it received – leaved a deeper imprint on the collective memory of Slovak citizens.” Instead, it was substituted by another model, based on Slovak traditions, history, and culture, which is conservative, respects authority and which is similar to Western Europe, emphasizing “social economy over the association of citizens”. The EU membership indirectly strengthens this model, the state instead of developing a “culture of dialogue” requires stricter regulation and control over the activities of the NGOs which are facing a dilemma “whether to keep the activist ethos of civil society or to accept the gradual Europeanization of the NGOs” in the situation when the financial environment is weak and unstable and there is lack of independent funding.

Besides other challenges, the Slovak NGOs will have to find out how to live with “the gradual decrease” of the ‘American’ civil society model in favor of the Europeanization of the third sector (linkage with the state and public sources)” and how to cope with “the gradual disappearance of the ‘US’ variety of civic engagement in the public domain”.<sup>79</sup>

## 6. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, RESEARCH & ACADEMIC EXCHANGES

### 6.1. The Fulbright Program

The Fulbright Program, one of the world’s largest and most diversified educational exchange programs, currently operates in more than 140 countries, including 51 countries with bi-national Fulbright Commissions. The J. W. Fulbright Commission for Educational Exchange in the Slovak Republic is “an autonomous, non-profit, non-partisan, bi-national institution” consisting of eight members appointed by the U.S. Ambassador to Slovak Republic and the Slovak Minister of Education, who are the Honorary Chairmen of the Board. Both governments, with the U.S. government contributing about 75 percent of the budget and the Slovak Gov-

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<sup>78</sup> Jiří Schneider: *Think-tanks in Visegrad Countries. From Policy research to Advocacy*. Budapest, Center for Policy Studies, Central European University 2002. <http://www.policy.hu/schneider/FRP.html>

<sup>79</sup> “This seed is present within the collective experience of Slovak society. In times of need, when democracy was threatened and standards of civility and tolerance were trampled, it was activated. Compared with neighboring countries, it is clearly imprinted on the Slovak experience. „*We and They*.“ *NGOs Influence on Decision-making Processes in the Visegrad Group Countries*. Edited by Tom Nicholson. Tokyo, The Sasakawa Peace Foundation 2008.

ernment contributing about 25 percent, jointly fund the Fulbright Program. Since 1994 the Fulbright Program in the Slovak Republic enabled over 220 Slovaks (34 in the period 2003-2006) to study, teach or conduct research in the United States and nearly 200 U.S. students, scholars, and professionals (25 in the period 2003-2006) have been awarded Fulbright grants to the Slovak Republic in a variety of academic fields. According to vast majority of the alumni, the Fulbright experience is of great value, for some of them it is a "life experience".

In 2001, the Slovak Fulbright Alumni Association (SFAA) was created with the objective **to network and translate the individual Fulbright experience into a long-term institutional impact**. In March 2007, it has participated at the "Support of Transformational Diplomacy Workshop", a joint event of the Czech and Slovak Fulbright Commissions in co-operation with the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs brought together Czech and Slovak active NGO's, Fulbright Alumni and Representatives of both American and European Partner Organizations to discuss the transformational diplomacy and its impact on countries in Eastern Europe. However, the Slovak Fulbright Alumni Association has not organized its own events and the activities and results of Fulbright Alumni Initiatives Awards Program are not very visible in Slovakia.

## 6.2. *The Slovak Academic Information Agency (SAIA)*

The Slovak Academic Information Agency is a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization which, since its establishment in 1990, has been implementing programs and providing services aimed at enhancement of civil society, and assisting in internationalization of education and research in Slovakia. From 2006 SAIA began to implement two new programs approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic. These are the National Scholarship Program of the Slovak Republic and M. R. Štefánik Fellowship. Consequently, SAIA currently operates eight major programs, but none of them is focusing on the USA. For Europe, the number of scholarship recipients provided on the basis of bi-lateral agreements in education and offers from individual countries were quite high (542 in 2004, 467 in 2005). In comparison, SAIA has made recommendations

for the American Fund Czechoslovak Relief, which each year awards citizens of Czech and Slovak Republics with complementary grants in the amount of 2000 USD for university study in the USA. In both 2004 and 2005 nine students were awarded on the basis of SAIA's recommendations.

Unfortunately, *Slovakia does not have major or significant private foundations, which would enable students, and/or experts' exchange, like for instance, Kosciuszko Foundation in Poland.*

In 2007 SAIA carried out project "Educational research cooperation between the Slovak Republic and the USA in the years 2000-2006". The result of the project revealed that during that period 18 out of 33 higher education institutions cooperated with the U.S. institutions; there were no details about the nature and results of this cooperation.

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*Our own research has shown that in Slovakia's school curricula, the presence of Atlantic and/or America-related topics is underrepresented. While the textbooks for high schools bring some basic information about American democracy, rule of law, economic prosperity, as well as about the importance of the US role in creating Czechoslovakia, the US role in the WW II and in the Cold War – the amount of information is insufficient and does not help the students and teachers in reflecting upon important events. The exceptions are some bi-lingual elementary and high schools, which have developed, sophisticated program on the US realities.*

On university level, we were not able to find any courses of American Studies that would go beyond the topics of American literature.

There are positive exceptions like scholarship schemes for fellows offered by the German Marshall Fund or Eisenhower Fellowship, like programs provided by private institutions of higher education (City University in Bratislava or Institute for Liberal Studies BISLA) or small program called Annual Slovak Seminars on the Free Society, launched by a philosopher Michael Novak and organized together with the Ladislav Hanus Society.

Publishing houses like Kalligram, magazines like *Kritika a kontext* (philosophy, cultural studies) jour-



nal like economic weekly *Trend* or a political-cultural weekly *Týždeň* (a part of it is devoted to foreign policy<sup>80</sup>) are a valuable source helping the students to better orient themselves in American thinking.

But in general, the numbers of students, programs, and projects are very low, and as for books, an illustrative example speaks volumes about the fact how widespread are even “classics” – Tocqueville’s seminal work *Democracy in America* was translated into Slovak only in 2006... It should be, however, added, that this disadvantage is to certain extent compensated by numerous Czech translations which Slovak students, teachers and intellectuals can easily read.

## 7. BUSINESS REPRESENTATION

### 7.1. American Chamber of Commerce - AmCham

A very important role in nurturing Slovak-American relationships and cooperating in the transatlantic economic area is played by business actors, first and foremost by a very active American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) in Slovakia. AmCham was founded in 1993 in Bratislava as an independent and self-supporting organization, entirely dependent on contributions from its members. Currently, its membership has reached more than 300 international and Slovak companies, including

many of the largest and important firms in Slovakia. Of this amount, approximately 40 % are American companies, about 40 % are Slovak companies and about 20 % are other nationalities. The U.S. is one of the top ten investors in Slovakia; there are more than 120 U.S. companies established on Slovak market and their number can still grow. The U.S. export to Slovakia grew by 25 percent in 2007 to \$680 million.<sup>81</sup>

AmCham organizes numerous regularly scheduled events throughout the year, including monthly Business Cocktails, Business Breakfasts and Roundtable Luncheons, which provide great opportunity to obtain new contacts. Through their publications such as *Connection* magazine, the Membership Directory, Membership Benefits and Opportunities, Slovak Brochure, Annual Report, and the web site they provide information for their members. Through their committees, Task Forces and other advocacy efforts, AmCham members can approach the government or other appropriate authorities to support the development of the business environment in Slovakia.<sup>82</sup> “AmCham became a respected partner of the Slovak Government and other important political, business and non-governmental players in Slovakia,” says Olga Algayerová, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “The positive influence of AmCham Slovakia on the business environment in the country is growing.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> František Šebej, its foreign policy editor, was not only an analyst connected with think-tank community, but he also served as the chair of Foreign Relations Committee of House of People of Federal Parliament in Czechoslovakia 1990-1992 and the head of European Affairs Committee in the Slovak Parliament in 1998-2002.

<sup>81</sup> The recent survey of the U.S. Embassy of U.S. firms operating in Slovakia showed that U.S. companies have invested more than \$3.8 billion in the country and employ almost 50,000 Slovak citizens. “This is five times more than the oft-quoted official government statistics,” says U.S. Ambassador to Slovakia Vincent Obsitnik, “which put the U.S. as only the 10<sup>th</sup> largest investor in Slovakia, primarily because the Statistical Office determines a company’s origin based on where it is registered, which is often a third country.” I don’t think anyone would doubt that Coca-Cola is a U.S. company, he adds. See Jana Shepperd-Žemlová: The Ambassadors speak..., *Connection*, July/August 2008.

<sup>82</sup> “AmCham has always been very supportive of all the government’s efforts to progress towards a knowledge-based society,” says Jake Slegers, the executive director of the AmCham in Slovakia. “Therefore, we established our Committee on Business-Academic Cooperation, which brings together company experts, CEOs, university representatives, students and NGOs, with the aim of creating better links between business and academia. This committee has already commented on the Act on Educations and Training and has actively participated in the Working Group, including preparing the draft Law on Vocational Education and the Act on Financial Education. We hope that by building “bridges” between the business sphere and the education system, and by assisting the education system to better reflect the needs of the labor market, AmCham is contributing to progress towards a knowledge-based economy in Slovakia.” Beata Balogová: They will return back. *The Slovak Spectator*, No. 27, 2008.

<sup>83</sup> According to the State Secretary, “the transatlantic economic area is, and for a long time ahead will remain, the most important business and investment relationship in world’s economy and a forefront of globalization. Slovakia is proud to be a part of it and very much appreciates the role of the American Chamber of Commerce in the process of building strong economic ties after the fall of the Iron Curtain.” *Connections*, May 2008.

AmCham is a visible and influential advocate of pro-business and pro-market climate in Slovakia.<sup>84</sup> According to a survey presented at the AmCham General Assembly in April 2008, “vast majority of member are satisfied with AmCham’s performance and think its activities are helpful in gaining contacts, networking and lobbying”.<sup>85</sup>

Among its most supportive members are companies like U. S. Steel Košice, Radison SAS Carlton Hotel, Phillip Morris Slovakia, KPMG, Oracle, Accenture, Ernst & Young, and DELL. The story of the U.S. Steel is an emblematic one: hundred years ago, in the first years of the company, there were Slovak workers helping to start a profitable future of the firm; in November 2000, the ownership of the complete metallurgical operation of the East Slovakian Steelworks was successfully transferred to the U. S. Steel Group, a unit of the United States Steel Corporation. It represents a successful partnership of Slovak technical skills and knowledge with strong American plant management and market-oriented business experience. “U. S. Steel Košice recognizes and accepts its role as a responsible community partner and is a leading contributor to the economic, environmental, and social development of Košice and Eastern Slovakia. The Company supports community projects in healthcare, education, charity, sport and culture” (<http://www.usske.sk/corpinfo/corpi-e.htm>)

## 7.2. Slovak American Enterprise Fund – SAEF

SAEF was established in 1991 as a nonprofit venture capital fund and private equity under the Support for Eastern European Democracy Act of 1989 in order to support the transition of the Czech and Slovak Republics to a global free-market economy. It is funded by U. S. taxpayers through appropriation

by the U. S. Congress. SAEF is investing its financial sources into small and medium sized enterprises in Slovakia. The Fund provides mid-term financing capital for private companies, which present a complete and sound business plan. Their products help to finance activities related to: expansion and development, management buy-outs/buy-ins, mergers and acquisitions. The mission of the Slovak American Enterprise Fund is to act as a catalyst for sustainable economic growth among small and medium sized enterprises in Slovakia. Their objective is to achieve superior capital returns for their investors by taking an active approach in building the success of the portfolio companies. Furthermore, SAEF offers for its portfolio companies *access to business knowledge, strategic partners, network of business contacts, new market opportunities and new talents to companies* ([www.SAEF.sk](http://www.SAEF.sk)).

Through September 2006, SAEF invested approximately \$49m in total. Since choosing Slovakia as its target market, SAEF has developed invaluable knowledge about the small and medium sized business sector in the country, which has affected its current investment model. SAEF has contributed to Slovakia’s success in developing a vibrant market economy and a strong spirit of entrepreneurship.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS

In an article published in July 2005, Ronald Asmus and Alexandr Vondra, two scholars and government officials personally involved on both sides of the Atlantic in the debate and policy decisions over these issues of Atlanticism, argued that thanks to a specific set of historical experiences the countries Central and Eastern Europe believe “that their national interests in Europe are better preserved via active American engagement that balances the influence of other major European powers”.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> “AmCham has been active in assessing legislation passed by the government,” continues Jake Slegers. “AmCham tends to advocate for less legislation with the aim of reducing the administrative burden on businesses and making the existing legislation as simple as possible. There is a significant amount of unproductive, unnecessary and even harmful barriers in place in the present system. We advocate removal of unnecessary administrative barriers to allow businesses to operate as productively and fairly as possible.” *The Slovak Spectator*, No. 27, 2008.

<sup>85</sup> *Connections*, May 2008.

<sup>86</sup> Ronald D. Asmus and Alexandr Vondra: The Origins of Atlanticism in Central and Eastern Europe. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol 18, Number 2, July 2005.

The authors wrote their piece as a response to a question raised by Timothy Garton Ash at a conference of Euro-Atlantic intellectuals on the margins of the Prague 2002: “Do we believe,” asked T. G. Ash, “that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, having just received invitations to join the Alliance and so proud of their pro-American orientation, would still be Atlanticist in ten years’ time? Or would they rather succumb to the wave of radical chic anti-American Euro-Gaullist sentiments on the rise in the western half of the continent?”

Their argumentation deserves a longer quotation. Their thesis was “that the Atlanticism of Central and Eastern Europe is rooted in history, national strategic interests and genuine and recent real-world experience.”<sup>87</sup> In the years of communist dominance, “America was overwhelmingly seen as the region’s best hope and the only Western country willing and able to counter Moscow and stand up for eventual freedom and independence”.<sup>88</sup>

There are also other factors which make America attractive: it is seen as a model and example for the CEE countries, which have undergone their own experience of oppression by totalitarian regimes: “After decades of living in state-managed and over-regulated societies, the Central and Eastern Europeans have considerable admiration for American-style individualism and capitalism. Whereas American-style capitalism is rejected in West European intellectual salons, in capitals from Tallinn to Bratislava you find governments experimenting with policies involving lower taxes, flat rates, etc.— ideas that have been developed in the United States (and the UK) yet largely ignored or rejected in Western Europe.”

But, say the authors, even if “there are real and reinforcing factors that have made Central and Eastern Europeans staunch Atlanticists,” it would be a mistake “to assume this is permanent. Neither Washington, nor the political elites in the region can take it for granted. Historical memories fade,

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<sup>87</sup> “If there is one largely positive historical experience the region has in common, it has been with the United States. In the eyes of most Central and East Europeans, the United States is the one major Western power that has never constituted a threat to any of them. On the contrary, it is a country that was central in the creation of many of these states (...) The independence and very existence of Central and Eastern Europe as we know it today, was largely created out of the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of World War I, and is attributable to American power, diplomacy and the idealism of President Woodrow Wilson.” Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> “If you ask Central and East Europeans, they will point to two American presidents, each of them very different, whose strategies and impact were critical to the eventual victory of freedom fighters behind the Iron Curtain. The first is Jimmy Carter and his National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, who in the late 1970s made human rights and democracy a core part of American strategy. While derided in many capitals of Western Europe at the time, this new American policy was warmly welcomed by dissidents in Central and Eastern Europe, who used it to help lay the foundation for Charter 77, Solidarity and other dissident movements throughout the region. (...) The second American president Central and Eastern Europeans will point to as having played a key role in helping them obtain their freedom is Ronald Reagan. Reagan was of course despised even more than Carter in Western Europe in the 1980s. But in retrospect it is clear that his military build-up and his clear rhetoric about the Soviet ‘evil empire’ helped to precipitate the final Soviet retreat under Gorbachev. (...) Thus, after 1989, Czechs, Polish, Hungarian and Slovak elites emerged on the European scene as generally pro-American. They considered the U.S. contribution to the end of the Cold War as well as to the liberation of captive nations as the most decisive among all other international factors. (...) The inclinations of many democratic leaders of post-communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe to look to the United States were further reinforced by the experience these countries had in the 1990s with NATO and the EU. While a major theme of the revolutions that swept away communist rule in 1989 was a ‘return to Europe’, many Central and Eastern Europeans soon discovered that many West Europeans held ambivalent feelings at best about opening the doors to welcome them into European and transatlantic institutions. (...) This disillusionment with the initial reaction of Western Europe was one factor that led Central and East European leaders as pilgrims to Washington. There they soon discovered that one of their biggest champions was the United States. (...) There was also a strong lobby among both Democrats and Republicans who from the outset saw the inclusion of these countries into the core institutions of the West as the natural next step in the consolidation of freedom and peace on the continent—and who quickly became champions of the issue. One need only compare Mitterrand’s skepticism towards the idea with the openness of President Bill Clinton or of leading Republican figures such as Richard Lugar or John McCain. Once again, the leaders of Central and Eastern Europe saw that it was the United States that was willing to bring its power to bear to champion their cause, stand up to Russian pressure and overcome the reticence of their Western European neighbors. This reaffirmed their faith in the United States as a benign superpower that was willing to champion their values and interests. Thanks to American leadership, they were able to transcend the dilemma of living in a geopolitical no-man’s-land between Germany and Russia and obtain the same level of security taken for granted in much of Western Europe.” Ibid.



gratitude is a wasting asset in international affairs, and elites turn over and retire.” According to them, Atlanticism in Central and Eastern Europe is not a blank cheque; its future will depend both on American behavior and on future shape of the EU and on domestic leadership that “will be central in shaping the future orientation of the region. Central and Eastern Europe have been fortunate to have a set of bold and brave leaders—ranging from former dissidents like Václav Havel to reform communists turned social democrats like Aleksander Kwaśniewski—who since the fall of communism have steered their countries toward and eventually into the West against the odds.” Today, both of them retired, and “it is time for the next generation of younger Central and Eastern European leaders to step forward and answer these questions. Yet, this time they will—unlike their predecessors—have the advantage of doing so sitting as full and equal members of the EU and NATO. The future of Atlanticism in the region will also depend on their ability to interpret the lessons of the past and to respond to the challenges that lie ahead. “But we believe,” conclude Asmus and Vondra, “that ten years from now they will still be making the right choices.”

However, very soon after Asmus and Vondra outlined favorable prospects for the future of Atlanticism in Central and Eastern Europe, several new developments have challenged their arguments. The CEE countries have experienced a wave of populism, sometime even a return of “the old wine of illiberal democracy in the new bottle of political populism”.<sup>89</sup> The liberal consensus of the transition period—market economy, pro-Western orientation in foreign affairs, pro-Atlantic attitudes—is no longer in a dominant position. While there are many explanations for this phenomenon (“post-accession hangovers,” “a second wave of disenchantment,” “reform fatigue,” “responses to real and perceived corruption,” “narrowly focused tech-

nocratic reformers”), it has taken place in times when the role of the U.S. almost everywhere in the world, and certainly in Europe, was diminished, the U.S. prestige has declined, and the American political and social model is much less attractive (and for the younger generation, also less known) than it was in the 90-ties.

In general, the pro-American attitude of the first non-communist governments of the CEE countries is no more the case. According to Charles Gatti, the period during which “when American diplomats made a request to a Central or Eastern European government in the 1990s, they did not have to ask twice,” is over (see his testimony for the House Foreign Affairs Committee, presented two years after Asmus’s and Vondra’s article, on July 25, 2007.<sup>90</sup> In the CEE countries, the popular feelings towards America are among the coldest in decades.

As for Slovakia’s position among these countries, the data assembled by Pew Global Attitudes Survey (June 2007), by Transatlantic Trends survey sponsored by the German Marshall Fund (September 2007), as well as by other surveys (both Eurobarometer and polls conducted by Slovak agencies) show that while Slovaks are quite friendly towards Americans, they are not so enthusiastic about different aspects of America’s life, mostly occupying the lowest level among the CEE countries included in the Pew as well as in the GMF sample (Poland, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovakia) – let it be the relationship towards the US as the state, US leadership in international politics, American ideas about democracy, or US-led effort to fight terrorism.

While Romanians are probably the strongest Atlanticists, Slovaks seem to have the weakest “Atlanticist identity”, and occasional rhetoric of some populist politicians does not create an atmosphere in which positive attitudes would flourish. (Interest-

<sup>89</sup> On this topic, see Martin Bútora – Olga Gyárfášová – Grigorij Mesežnikov – Thomas W. Skladony (Eds.): *Democracy and Populism in Central Europe: The Visegrad Elections and Their Aftermath*. Bratislava, Institute for Public Affairs 2007; Václav Nekvapil and Maria Staszkievicz (Eds.): *Populism in Central Europe*. Prague, Association for International Affairs 2007, and Olga Gyárfášová – Grigorij Mesežnikov – Daniel Smilov: *Populist Politics and Liberal Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe*. Bratislava, Institute for Public Affairs 2008.

<sup>90</sup> Charles Gatti: *Backsliding in Central and Eastern Europe. Testimony prepared for The Honorable Tom Lantos, Chairman, and the House Foreign Affairs Committee*. Washington, DC. July 25, 2007.

ingly enough, favorable attitudes toward the U.S. increased in 2005 when President Bush delivered the first-ever visit of a U.S. president to Slovakia.) Another issue is the reluctance of government officials to discuss NATO-related issues or commonly shared values in their public statements, which may explain why Slovak citizens seem somewhat to be losing interest in the Alliance.

At the same time, as we already suggested, Slovaks have repeatedly expressed very positive stance towards the EU, which is now supported by the injections from EU structural funds helping Slovakia's economy to prosper, Slovakia's infrastructure to improve and Slovakia's regions to revive.

This is not to say that regardless from public reservations on America's leading role in international politics<sup>91</sup>, the democratic policymakers in Slovakia are not aware of the unique position of the U.S. in contributing both to solving long-term challenges, and coping with imminent crisis (like, for instance, a threat of deadly conflict between India and Pakistan some time ago). From non-proliferation of WMD to fighting fanatical Islamism; from supporting free market to enabling more nations and individuals to positively participate on globalization; from promoting liberty and democracy to standing against tyrannical regimes worldwide; from balancing against rising China to resisting resurgent imperialist inclinations of Russia – the U.S. presence is indispensable.

For Slovak democrats, U.S. assistance in catching-up with our integration aspirations, in particular the entry into NATO has been highly appreciated.

For Slovak civic activists, U.S. input in development of civil society in Slovakia, is a part of their proud story. Their American colleagues often inspired Slovak reformers in think tanks. For Slovak economy, the U.S. investments, including the strategic one, like the U.S. Steel in Eastern Slovakia, are an inseparable part of Slovakia's economic miracle. And it is not only about money, it is also about responsible corporate behavior, about fighting corruption, and helping to integrate excluded groups of populations, like Roma, by providing them job opportunities.

Both the military and diplomatic establishment, including their highest echelons, is not anti-American: on the contrary, they are looking for pragmatic cooperation. But they do not seem to have a sufficient *modus operandi* to work on productive partnership ties and projects. And while there is a strong base for mutual relationships in the economic sphere, at the same time, Slovakia has currently an etatist, statist-oriented ruling coalition, including a member that is, from a political angle, openly anti-American.

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It is not clear what will follow – the strength of the mutual ties, the relevance of transatlantic agenda, and the efficiency of transatlantic institutions, like NATO, will be tested in upcoming months and years. Not only because of the change in America (presidential elections), but also because of possible turbulences in crisis or problematic areas: Kosovo, Middle East, Bosnia, Georgia, frozen conflicts, Russia, Iran). Partnership is always tested and confirmed – or not – in action.

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<sup>91</sup> For details, see the chapter on public opinion in Slovakia.

## *Representation of the United State in Polish Public Discourse*

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### INTRODUCTION

Anti-American attitudes have spread throughout Europe in recent years, especially after the start of the war in Iraq. In these circumstances, Jeffrey Goldfarb's call for an intelligent form of anti-Americanism is particularly timely<sup>1</sup>. This "intelligent form" allows people to see the internal diversity of America and to distinguish the concrete policies of various governments in the US, a country with a long democratic tradition and internal mechanisms for dealing with its own imperfections. Intelligent anti-Americanism is the opposite of the form of anti-Americanism that Norman Podhoretz compared to anti-Semitism. Podhoretz argued that this latter type of anti-Americanism is an irrational ideology that hopes the US fails and hates everything American<sup>2</sup>.

This type of anti-Americanism is uncommon in Poland or other post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe. In Poland, pro-American attitudes resulted from a number of historical processes and policies both before and after 1989<sup>3</sup>. During the post-Communist transformation period,

the US served as the antithesis of Communism in terms of economic well-being, political freedom and military security, unlike Europe, which was perceived more as a spiritual and civilization point of reference<sup>4</sup>. After its accession to the European Union in May 2004, however, Poland became more involved in European politics and economy. The overall pro-American attitude in Poland<sup>5</sup> has not changed much, but it is no longer as widespread<sup>6</sup> and it has started to change qualitatively as well under the influence of closer relations with the EU. Openly anti-American attitudes are still limited in Poland and are mostly "imported" for ideological or political reasons (e.g. by the extreme left). As Ivan Kraštev has suggested, in some Central and Eastern European countries, a strange attitude towards America has emerged among the political elites that can be called anti-anti-Americanism.<sup>7</sup> This stance is opposed to "unintelligent" anti-Americanism and attempts to secure a stable place for the US in the new political identity of these countries.

Undoubtedly, there are various forms of anti-Americanism as well as pro-Americanism. This essay at-

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<sup>1</sup> Goldfarb, Jeffrey: "How to Be an Intelligent Anti-American", in: *Logos*, no. 1 (1) Winter 2002, pp. 14-27.

<sup>2</sup> GW 14-15.10.2006: "Only the War Counts" (interview with Norman Podhoretz); compare with: *Europa* 03.02.2007, "Does America Rule the World?" (discussion between Norman Podhoretz, Ryszard Legutko and Radosław Sikorski).

<sup>3</sup> See for example Michałek, Krzysztof: "The Quest for the New Kolchida - The Origins of Pro-Americanism in Poland in the Years 1918 to 1989", in: Kolarska-Bobińska, Lena, Jacek Kucharczyk and Piotr M. Kaczyński (eds.), *Bridges Across the Atlantic? The Attitudes of Poles, Czechs and Slovaks Toward the United States*. Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw, 2005, pp. 15-33; Kuźniar, Roman and Andrzej Szeptycki, "The Role of the United States in the Foreign Policy of the Third Republic of Poland," in: Kolarska-Bobińska, Lena, Jacek Kucharczyk and Piotr M. Kaczyński (eds.), *Ibidem.*, pp. 115-151. For a similar view see *Europa* 10.08.2005: "Looking for Pro-Americanism", Anne Applebaum.

<sup>4</sup> Compare: Horolets, Anna. *Obrazy Europy w polskim dyskursie publicznym [Representations of Europe in Polish Public Discourse]*, Universitas, Kraków, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> This attitude is not the outcome of some "objective", detailed knowledge of the country, but rather of "the myth of the USA as a 'country of freedom'": Wenzel Michał and Krzysztof Zagórski, "The Choice of the Poles - American vs. European Social Models", in: Kolarska-Bobińska, Lena, Jacek Kucharczyk and Piotr M. Kaczyński (eds.), *Op.cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>6</sup> Compared to January 2006, in January 2007 positive opinions about the US had fallen from 62% to 34% while negative opinions had increased from 15% to 24% (CBOS, BS/10/2007, January 2007).

<sup>7</sup> "The End of the Age of Freedom: The Failure of Global Interventionism", by Ivan Kraštev, *Europa* 07.06.2006.

tempts to establish which attitudes to the US prevailed in Polish public debate between September 2005 and July 2007. The following questions arise from the main line of inquiry: Which topics most effectively attracted public opinion to the US and its role for Poland? Did these topics produce cohesive or divided attitudes to the US? What were the lines of division in Polish public discourse concerning the US (were they political, ideological, or did they depend on the issues being assessed)?

## I. THE ROLE OF PUBLIC DISCOURSE

To clarify the role of public discourse in society, several theoretical and methodological points must be made. Public discourse is a form of institutionalized communication regarding issues of general interest and concern that are recognized by the public as important and legitimate, i.e. as deserving its attention and/or involvement. In academic debates, this definition is contentious, because it implies the existence of a single general public within a state. In this essay, however, the obvious differences among publics (e.g. working class, upper or middle class publics) will not be addressed.

Public discourse includes first and foremost the discourse of symbolic elites and power elites<sup>8</sup>. The latter produce events and processes that require explanation in the form of parliamentary debates, speeches by the president, prime minister and other leading political figures, as well as interviews given to the press; all of these constitute public discourse. The symbolic elites include intellectuals, professionals, leaders of non-governmental organizations, as well as media celebrities. The media are increasingly powerful and able to

mould public discourse and spin political news and positions so they can be accessed and noticed by the general public. Pierre Bourdieu was critical of the role of the media in shaping public discourse:

“Journalism, which filters, acquires and interprets all public speeches according to its most typical logic – “for” or “against”, “everything or nothing” – attempts to force everyone to make an idiotic choice...”<sup>9</sup>.

This media logic of opposing sides and arguments tends to create a shallow image of the world, as in the case of pro- and anti-American attitudes.

Public discourse is thus produced by the legislative and executive branches, party politics, and the media, all of which are connected through mutual quotation and reference<sup>10</sup>. However, as Norman Fairclough argued, “a single text is insignificant: the impact of the media is cumulative, and operates through the repetition of particular ways of handling causality and agency, particular ways of positioning the reader, and so forth”<sup>11</sup>. This means that we should consider only the repetitive features of public discourse and only those topics and lines of division that transcend the various discourse genres.

This essay draws a general map of topics that occupied public discourse on the US in Poland, and assesses the relative importance of the various issues.<sup>12</sup> The issues and debates are analyzed to identify the lines of divisions in attitudes towards the US. Particular attention is paid to those arguments that can produce a negative image of the US in Poland. The topics of public discourse that shape attitudes to the US are grouped into four broad categories.

<sup>8</sup> For a more detailed definition of public discourse, see: Czyżewski, Marek: Wprowadzenie [“Introduction”], in: Czyżewski, Marek, Sergiusz Kowalski and Andrzej Piotrowski. *Rytualny chaos. Studium dyskursu publicznego* [Ritual Chaos: The Study of Public Discourse], Aurelius, Kraków, 1997, pp. 6-37. For a discussion of the limitations of the term “public discourse” as well as the Habermasian “public sphere”, see: Calhoun, Craig (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1994.

<sup>9</sup> *Le Monde Diplomatique Polska*, April 2006, “On a European Social Movement”, by Pierre Bourdieu. For a more detailed presentation of Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of the journalistic field see also: Benson, R. and E. Neveu (eds.), *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*. Polity Press, Cambridge and Malden, MA, 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Wodak, Ruth: “The Discourse – Historical Approach”, in: Wodak, Ruth and Michael Meyer (ed.), *Methods in Critical Discourse Analysis*, Sage, London, 2001, pp. 63-94.

<sup>11</sup> Fairclough, Norman, *Language and Power*, Longman, New York, 1989, p. 54.

<sup>12</sup> The following newspapers were selected for this analysis. Two dailies, *Rzeczpospolita* and *Gazeta Wyborcza*, were analyzed in a systematic manner. Materials from the following newspapers and magazines were also used selectively to map the variety of opinions from far right to far left, from non-religious to strongly religious: *Dziennik* with its weekly *Europa* supplement; *Trybuna*; and *Nasz Dziennik*. See the Annex for the list of abbreviations and information on the political leanings and circulation of each newspaper.



First, attitudes to the US as a player in international politics and as an ally of Poland are analyzed. This is the most salient category. Second, attitudes to the US as a model for democratic and free market changes after 1989 are considered. Third, images of the US as a country with which Polish people have first-hand contacts are studied. Last, representations of American culture are analyzed.

## II. DOMAINS OF POLISH PUBLIC DISCOURSE ON THE US

### II. 1. *The US as an international player and an ally of Poland*

The US often appears in Polish media discourse as a country that takes an active part in world politics (e.g. in Iraq, Kosovo, Syria, Lebanon etc.). It is represented in the press as a global player that influences many regions and without whom virtually no global problem can be solved. The minister of foreign affairs in the Kaczyński cabinet, Anna Fotyga, stated in her report to the Polish parliament on the state of international relations: “In terms of bilateral relations I would like to start with the United States, the guarantor of the global order”<sup>13</sup>. The US is also portrayed as Poland’s ally. In his inaugural address to the parliament on November 10, 2005, Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz stated that Poland should build its economic well-being on belonging to EU structures, while in matters of national security, Poland’s membership in NATO and its cooperation with the US is crucial<sup>14</sup>. The “division of labor” between the US and the EU presented in this exposé shows how emphases are placed in public debate. In the majority of public discussions, the role of the US is strongly linked to the issue of security, thus – along with NATO – the United States is represented as a guarantor of military security and stability in Poland, especially vis-à-

vis Russia. Transatlantic cooperation is viewed not only through the framework of Poland’s membership in NATO, but also through direct cooperation with the US on military development and security.

Yet this vision is not shared by all the symbolic elites, and increasingly one hears voices that are either moderately skeptical or openly critical of close cooperation with the US at the expense of developing effective EU structures to deal with security and international affairs. Some question the underlying assumption that the US is a reliable ally, while others doubt that Poland’s national interests are identical with those of the US, and argue that the two should be distinguished even while preserving partner relationships. In order to accurately present opinions that differ from the pro-American mainstream of Poland’s political and symbolic elites, these opinions must be placed in the context of arguments about particular issues, and their potential for influencing public opinion must be assessed. During the last two years these contexts have included the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the war on terror, and the Missile Defense installation, to name a few. They will be presented in more detail below.

#### II. 1. 1. The War in Iraq

During the past two years, the intervention in Iraq has remained high on the public agenda and therefore has affected public opinion on relations between Poland and the United States. Three consecutive Polish governments and two Polish presidents were in favor of supporting the US in the intervention in Iraq. In the middle of 2007, the eighth rotation of Polish troops (900 people) was stationed in Iraq as a part of the Multinational Force<sup>15</sup>. The UN mandate for the Multinational Force was extended to the end of 2007 at the request of the Iraqi government<sup>16</sup>. Yet, among Poland’s political and symbolic elites, attitudes to the Polish presence in Iraq are not unanimous.

<sup>13</sup> 41st Sitting of the Sejm, 11.05.2007. The image of the US as a leading global player appears in articles on current international politics that are devoted to such issues as Israel’s attack on Lebanon (e.g. Rz 14.07.2006 “Almost All of Europe Filled with Indignation”, Rz 15.07.2006 “The Specter of Regional War”); the threat of war with Iran (e.g. Rz 28.12.2005 “Will the USA Attack Iran?”, Rz 14.01.2006 “Together Against Iran”); the production of nuclear weapon by North Korea (Rz 16.05.2006 “The Atomic Game with Kim”), the independence of Kosovo (Rz 30.04.2007 “USA: Kosovo Has to Become Independent”) and so on.

<sup>14</sup> *Przegląd Rządowy [Government Review]*, no. 11 (173), November 2005, Office of the Prime Minister, Warsaw, p. 23.

<sup>15</sup> *Ministry of Defense Information Bulletin*, <http://www.do.wp.mil.pl/strona.php?idstrona=16>, accessed 09.07.2007.

<sup>16</sup> *Resolution of the UN Security Council* no. 1723, November 28, 2006, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2006/sc8879.doc.htm>, accessed 09.08.2007.



The debate over the withdrawal of Polish troops from Iraq in the Polish parliament in December 2005<sup>17</sup>, as well as its continuation in the Parliamentary International Affairs Committee<sup>18</sup>, can provide some insights into the lines of division on the issue. The standpoint of the ruling PiS party was well summarized by a press commentator:

“In the case of the new elite, this alliance is the expression of deeper strategic thinking and an ideological liking for the American model of doing international politics. The thinking goes back to the Cold War and a belief in the trustworthiness and strength of America as an ally. It is supported by a certain suspicion and disbelief in the strength of Europe and its ability to provide security for itself – and thus for Poland – independently.”<sup>19</sup>

The LPR, Self-Defense, and PSL parties took pride in having been against the intervention in Iraq from its start in 2003. The LPR put forward diverse arguments including the unjust and immoral nature of the war (referring to Christian ethics), the number of civilian victims among the Iraqis, losses of Polish soldiers, the lack of economic and other benefits for Poland (e.g. contracts for Polish companies, the abolition of the American visa requirement for Poles) as well as the danger that Poland would become a target of terrorist attacks. This argument was repeated in the draft resolution on the withdrawal of Polish troops from Iraq<sup>20</sup>.

Self-Defense representative Mateusz Piskorski emphasized the disregard for international law and violations of human rights by the US as the reasons why his party opposed Poland's participation in the mission. He also noted the possibility that the neo-

conservative sympathies of Radosław Sikorski, the minister of defense, had influenced the decision to prolong the mission. In the draft resolution on the withdrawal of Polish troops from Iraq, Self-Defense put forward yet another argument against the mission:

“The mission undermines the heroic past of Poland, which was often occupied and resisted occupation, because now [Poland] becomes an occupier itself”<sup>21</sup>.

While the position of Self-Defense on Iraq later underwent some modifications for political reasons (the party received an offer to join the coalition government), the party never assessed the war in a positive way.<sup>22</sup>

Independent MP Zygmunt Wrzodak (formerly LPR) was openly anti-American, claiming that the war in Iraq was a plot by Israel which – with the help of the US – aimed to achieve supremacy in the Middle East, while on the American side the war had been dreamed up by neo-conservative Zionists as well as corporations seeking access to cheap oil<sup>23</sup>. The latter argument is not typical of Poland's political elites, even those that most ardently oppose the war. However, this exotic view is worth mentioning since similar arguments appear in the far-right press, which has some influence on public opinion (*Nasz Dziennik* and *Radio Maryja*)<sup>24</sup>.

PO representatives stated that their party had supported Poland's participation in the intervention in 2003, but that they currently opposed prolonging the mission because the economic benefits that had been part of the “deal” with the Americans had not materialized. This argument about the lack of

<sup>17</sup> Shorthand record of the 6<sup>th</sup> Sitting of the Sejm, 29. 12.2005.

<sup>18</sup> For instance, the shorthand records of KSZA Sitzings no. 5, 27 and 42, in *Bulletins of the Parliamentary Commissions* no. 160 (16.12.2005); no. 451 (20.03.2006) and no. 859 (12.07.2006) respectively.

<sup>19</sup> GW 29.12.2005 “It's Good that we Stay in Iraq”, Antoni Podolski.

<sup>20</sup> Bogusław Sobczak (LPR): Sejm of the Republic of Poland, V term, print nr 370.

<sup>21</sup> Sejm of the Republic of Poland, V term, print nr 369.

<sup>22</sup> Compare: GW 07.01.2006 “Will Lepper Trade Iraq for a Share in Government?” (Andrzej Lepper is the leader of Self-Defense.) The journalist quoted an anonymous Self-Defense member who stated that the party desired cooperation with both East and West, and who claimed that the issue of Iraq was no longer crucial.

<sup>23</sup> Zygmunt Wrzodak (independent), in: Shorthand Record of the 6<sup>th</sup> Sitting of the Sejm, 29.12.2005, p. 229.

<sup>24</sup> Various sources estimate the listeners of the far-right *Radio Maryja* at up to four million people, which makes it an influential media outlet. However, voting behavior research has shown that listening to this station does not directly influence people's political behavior, e.g. voting for the LPR or PiS. For details see: Polish General Election Study 2005, at: <http://www.isppan.waw.pl/pgsw/index2.html>, 23.07.2007.

political and economic benefits has recurred in the speeches of PO members in the Sejm and in the press<sup>25</sup>.

The SLD promoted the immediate withdrawal of Polish troops, even though it had been the SLD's decision as a ruling party to send Polish troops to Iraq in 2003. SLD members argued that the mission could be considered accomplished as of the end of 2005 because democratic elections had been held in Iraq. The SLD also pointed out that – as the previous ruling party – they had prepared provisions that made the withdrawal of Polish troops from Iraq feasible<sup>26</sup>. Interestingly, vague comparisons between the Soviet Union's past interventions and the US intervention in Iraq appeared in the SLD's rhetoric:

"I am asking ... what has convinced the government of Law and Justice to continue the stabilization mission for another year? What are the motives behind this decision? Are they based only on the request from the government of the United States? [...] What has to happen [for the government] to realize that Iraqi people can manage without **brotherly** help?" [emphasis added – A.H.]<sup>27</sup>.

This theme appeared occasionally in parliamentary debates: "Let's not liberate others as we ourselves used to be liberated; let's not serve Americans without receiving anything in exchange"<sup>28</sup>. It also appeared in a speech by Mateusz Piskorski from Self-Defense:

"This invasion of ours, and our presence in Iraq, is often presented by [the leader of PiS Jarosław] Kaczyński as our war, and as an opportunity for Polish troops to get training. In the old days, in 1938 (sic!) and in 1968, we also sent Polish troops for training, as it was then defined, to Czechoslovakia, so maybe it would be more appropriate [to send them there now] than to send them to Iraq. Of course, this statement is ironical and sarcastic."<sup>29</sup>

Although not widely held, this view represents a surprising shift in perceptions of the US in Polish public discourse, and one that could hurt the image of the US, since "brotherly" help for other countries has very negative connotations arising from the Communist period.

Most MPs who took part in the debate in December 2005 expressed anti-war sentiments (representatives of the LPR, PSL and Self-Defense) or at least postulated the need to withdraw Polish troops from Iraq (PO, SLD). Even MPs from the ruling party (PiS) asked government representatives for more evidence that the mission was benefiting Poland<sup>30</sup>. The decision made by the government and supported by the president was to prolong the mission. The same scenario – only with less attention in the Sejm – was repeated a year later<sup>31</sup>.

The public perception of the war in Iraq is negative<sup>32</sup>. Although anti-war protests in Poland attract far fewer people than in "Old" Europe or in

<sup>25</sup> Jarosław Wałęsa (PO): "For national-political reasons, the present ruling elite wishes to demonstrate that Poland counts in global politics and that cooperation with the US brings measurable benefits. This, however, is misleading and out of line with the real achievements." In: *Shorthand Record of the 10<sup>th</sup> Sitting of the Sejm*, 15.02.2006, p. 36; Bronisław Komorowski (PO): "Our presence in Iraq is being prolonged beyond the real needs and our commitments. We have exceeded our responsibilities in Iraq by 300%", in: *Shorthand Record of the 41<sup>st</sup> Sitting of the Sejm*, 11.05.2007, p. 376. Compare: GW 16.10.2006 "Time for Debate on Europe" Bronisław Komorowski (PO): "... the government does not have a vision for ... shaping more **pragmatic** relations with the US." [emphasis added – A.H.]

<sup>26</sup> Zbyszek Zaborowski (SLD): "In March 2005 the government of Marek Belka made a decision to terminate the mission in January 2006", in: *Shorthand Record of the 6<sup>th</sup> Sitting of the Sejm*, 29.12.2005, p. 224.

<sup>27</sup> Zbyszek Zaborowski (SLD): *Shorthand Record of the 6<sup>th</sup> Sitting of the Sejm*, 29.12.2005, p. 224.

<sup>28</sup> The opinion of this MP is not representative of the standpoint of her party: Stanisława Anna Okularczyk (PO): *Shorthand Record of the 44<sup>th</sup> Sitting of the Sejm*, 27.06.2007, p. 122.

<sup>29</sup> Mateusz Piskorski (Self-Defense): *Shorthand Record of the 6<sup>th</sup> Sitting of the Sejm*, 29.12.2005, p. 227.

<sup>30</sup> Jędrzej Jędrzych (PiS) requests explanations of the consequences of an immediate withdrawal of the International Forces from Iraq; the benefits the Polish Army receives from taking part in the mission; specifics about the area in which Polish troops are stationed, etc. In: *Shorthand Record of the 6<sup>th</sup> Sitting of the Sejm*, 29.12.2005, p. 226.

<sup>31</sup> Presently, a similar decision from one year later (December 22, 2006) forms the legal basis for the presence of Polish troops in Iraq, <http://www.do.wp.mil.pl/strona.php?idstrona=16>, accessed 09.08.2007.

<sup>32</sup> IAR 27.06.2007 "Poles do not Want Troops in Iraq and Afghanistan". The methods of conducting warfare in Iraq were criticized by 52% of respondents in January 2007 (CBOS, BS/10/2007, January 2007).

the US itself, they take place regularly. These anti-war protests are initiated and organized by non-governmental organizations and take the form of a social movement. For instance, several anti-war demonstrations were organized and promoted by left-wing parties and non-governmental organizations (e.g. the Greens 2004, Polish Labor Party, New Left and others) as well as left-leaning media that define themselves as “new left”, such as *Krytyka Polityczna*<sup>33</sup>. Since these parties are not in parliament, the circulation of information via the Internet by NGOs and the work of journalists are more noticeable to general public. However, these movements do not significantly influence official party politics. The divisions on Iraq among the political elites do not have clear ideological bases but instead are dictated by a mixture of ideology and pragmatism.

Debates among politicians are echoed and elaborated on by discussions in the media. In general, the leading opinion newspapers, *Gazeta Wyborcza* (GW), *Dziennik* (Dz) and *Rzeczpospolita* (Rz) accept the presence of the US in Iraq as a lesser evil. Their strategic reasoning is intertwined with political considerations:

“The Polish government could not have made a different decision than leaving our troops in Iraq for another year. A withdrawal would have been interpreted by the US as well as by Europe, which opposes the war, as giving in to the populism and anti-Western attitudes of Self-Defense and LPR.”<sup>34</sup>

Positive arguments rely on the premise that the mission ensures further cooperation as well as military and security support for Poland from its American partner. Other positive arguments include the economic benefits as well as the boost to Poland’s bargaining position in negotiations with the US. Among the three papers, *Gazeta Wyborcza* is the most reserved in its evaluation of the results and pros-

pects of the intervention and the presence of the US and its allies in Iraq. Among the criticism that appears in all three newspapers, the following arguments can be distinguished: the lack of visible positive results for the Iraqi population; the ruin of the country; the high ratio of civilian casualties; and the failure to build a democracy in Iraq. The proliferation of terrorism in the world as an outcome of the Iraq war is also highlighted:

“The 9/11 attack had a surprisingly small influence on the mobilization of Islamic fanatics. Their number as well as the number of attacks started growing only after the start of the war in Iraq.”<sup>35</sup>

The lack of noticeable economic and political benefits for Poland in the last three years is also mentioned. Criticism in *Gazeta Wyborcza* however is addressed not so much to the US as to the Polish ruling elites, who are attacked for their servility to the US and their clumsy diplomacy.<sup>36</sup> In this case, the negative impact of the Iraqi war on the US image is eclipsed by domestic political arguments. In other words, it is not the US that is blamed for the failures in Iraq, but the Polish government. A different perspective is presented in the left-wing paper *Trybuna* (T), which accuses the US of dragging Poland into war with falsehoods: “We participated in the invasion of Iraq because the US lied about its reasons.”<sup>37</sup>

The most elaborate critique of the war in Iraq can be found in the far-right *Nasz Dziennik* (ND). The anti-Americanism of the newspaper identifies the US with rich, neo-conservatives (who allegedly follow Trotsky’s ideology of permanent war), Jews (Zionists) who are interested in building a hegemonic state of Israel, and atheists (the past of some of neo-conservatives in leftist movements in the 1960s and 1970s is virtually equated with Communist terrorism<sup>38</sup> in Europe in the 1970s).

<sup>33</sup> In an editorial titled “Stop the War!” in *Krytyka Polityczna* 01.10.2005, the exact date, time and route of the anti-war demonstration was described (The demonstration, “Withdraw the Troops From Iraq Now! Money for the Starving – Not for War!” took place on October 6, 2005, three days before the presidential elections). See also <http://www.isw.republika.pl/>; <http://www.irak.pl/>, accessed 29.07.2007.

<sup>34</sup> GW 29.12.2005 “It’s Good that we Stay in Iraq”, Antoni Podolski.

<sup>35</sup> GW 28.02.2007 “Iraq Feeds Terrorism”, Paweł Szczerkowski.

<sup>36</sup> GW 29.12.2005 “It’s Good that we Stay in Iraq”, Antoni Podolski.

<sup>37</sup> T 24.11.2005 [Subtitle:] Anti-Missiles: Poland in US Military Chariot [Title:] “We Will be a Target.”

<sup>38</sup> Communist terrorism includes the terrorist acts of groups such as the Italian Red Brigades.



“The invasion of Afghanistan was a prelude to the attack on Iraq, which was not supposed to end in Baghdad. Teheran was to be the next target for conquest on the road to victory in the global war ‘on terror’. [...] The US wanted to build a power base which could not be challenged by anybody on earth, and to subdue the world to one government...”<sup>39</sup>

According to the ND, poor people, Iraq civilians and even Islamic terrorists (who are defined as “pushed to such drastic measures by poverty”) are considered to be on the positive side, i.e. opposed to America. However, Islam is also criticized for persecuting Christians.<sup>40</sup>

The event that galvanized Polish public opinion on the Iraq war was the trial and execution of Saddam Hussein.<sup>41</sup> The former Iraqi dictator was not liked by the Polish media, but his execution, followed by the scandal of the smuggled recording of the execution, polarized opinions on how perpetrators of crimes against humanity should be punished in democratic societies. The execution was criticized by some journalists and experts as an act of barbarism that undermined democracy’s claim to be superior to dictatorship<sup>42</sup>. Others criticized it for being a tactical mistake.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, the main newspapers evaluated the event positively as the rightful end for a cruel dictator and an act of justice.<sup>44</sup>

Two aspects of the anti-war argument are particularly likely to generate a more US-skeptical public opinion: a) the argument presenting the US as the perpetrator of an unjust war and the violator of another country’s sovereignty, which is a highly significant issue in Poland; b) the argument that the war in Iraq just about oil. The latter claim could produce an image of the US as a supranational corporation that ruthlessly pursues its own interests. In addition, the prospect of being alienated within Europe due to close ties with the US in the intervention in Iraq has contributed to a more reserved attitude to the US in Polish public discourse. However, this caution is less noticeable following the last elections in Germany and France that led to warmer relations between “Old” Europe and the US.

### II.1.2. The NATO mission in Afghanistan

Parallel to the war in Iraq, the intervention in Afghanistan also affects views of the US in Polish public discourse, even though the mission has been NATO-led since 2007<sup>45</sup>. The Polish presence increased considerably in 2007 from previous years (1,000 Polish troops are present in Afghanistan at the moment). The role of these troops has changed from observers to a more active force prepared to confront the Taliban army<sup>46</sup>. Especially recently, when some Polish soldiers reportedly refused to obey the orders of the American

<sup>39</sup> ND 27.04.2007 “Absurd Drama of an Empire”, Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski.

<sup>40</sup> See for example: ND 22.01.2007, “Islamofascism or Energy-Fascism?”, Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski; ND 3-4.02.2007 “Tragedy for Some, Interest for Others”, Waldemar Mszewski.

<sup>41</sup> 20% of respondents said the trial and execution of Saddam Hussein and other aspects of the war in Iraq were the most significant event of 2006 (CBOS, BS/13/2007, January 2007, by Michał Wenzel).

<sup>42</sup> GW 02.01.2007 “Executing Saddam is Barbarism”, Marek Antoni Nowicki (Helsinki Foundation of Human Rights); Rz 06.01.2007 “Killing Saddam”, Dariusz Rosiak.

<sup>43</sup> Rz 02.01.2007 “Now He Will Become a Martyr”, interview with Bahijat Suliman (The Association of Iraqis in Poland): “This execution is the next episode in the cruel American soap opera of murder and oppression against the Iraqi people”.

<sup>44</sup> GW 27.12.2006 “Saddam Has to Die”; GW 03.01.2007 “Saddam the Martyr versus Saddam the Monster”, Paweł Szczerkowski; Rz 02.01.2007 “This Despot Deserved Death”, interview with Hatif Janabi: “Many people [in Iraq] were happy [after Saddam’s execution]. Saddam deserved such a death.”

<sup>45</sup> NATO took command in Afghanistan at the end of 2006. This is now the largest NATO-led operation of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

<sup>46</sup> Press debate after the first information appeared regarding the change in the character of the mission: Rz 21.29.2006 “Poles will Fight With the Taliban”; Rz 15.09.2006 “Difficult Mission of the Poles”; Rz 29.09.2006 “NATO will Control the Whole of Afghanistan”; Compare: Polish Radio, “*Sygnaly Dnia*” 16.09.2006 “Afghanistan is a Dangerous Mission”, General Stanisław Koziej, former deputy minister of defense, warned that the mission will be ineffective because the fighters are scattered and will attack from cover. Press discourse on the implementation of the new mission: Dz 14.06.2007 “First Day of Real War for Poles”; GW 22.07.2007 “Poles Have to Persuade [the allies] to Change Their Strategy in Afghanistan”, by General Stanisław Koziej.



command<sup>47</sup>, issues were raised in the press concerning the nature of the partnership between the US and Poland. According to some sources, the soldiers refused to use non-armored Hummers, and this was their ‘mutiny’<sup>48</sup>, while signs have appeared that the return of several Polish soldiers to Poland was due to psychological problems<sup>49</sup>. In our search for arguments that could hurt the American image in Polish discourse, the mistreatment of Poles by Americans – at the level of both diplomacy and ordinary soldiering – deserves particular attention, because it creates an image of the US as a disloyal partner. Although not widespread, the theme of disloyalty or unequal partnership was repeated in other contexts as well. In parliamentary debates on Polish foreign policy, the main claim repeated by opposition representatives was that Poland’s cooperation with NATO and the US is one-sided. The technical assistance that the US offered was dismissed as insufficient by Mateusz Piskorski (Self-Defense). Janusz Dobrosz (LPR) called the relationship of the Polish government to the US as “flattery on demand”, and claimed that Poland was getting nothing out of its engagement in Afghanistan<sup>50</sup>. Interestingly, both parties at the time were a part of the coalition government. Tadeusz Iwiński (SLD) claimed that in light of the dissolution of the Army Information Service (WSI), counter-intelligence would be hard to come by in Afghanistan. This argument was repeated by Jarosław Wałęsa (PO)<sup>51</sup>. Representatives of the PO were also concerned

with the poor equipment and lack of preparation of the soldiers and the mission in general<sup>52</sup>. Representatives of the ruling PiS party emphasized the civilization mission of the NATO troops, and noted the negative consequences of any restoration of Taliban rule in the country such as the eradication of schools and the maltreatment of women.<sup>53</sup> Government officials also tried to refute the claim about a lack of reciprocity from the US<sup>54</sup>, but they were repeatedly blamed for inept diplomacy on this issue by the opposition and the press.<sup>55</sup>

The main press concerns about the mission of the Polish troops in Afghanistan are the purpose of the mission and its chances of success (i.e. establishing a democratic state and a functioning economy in Afghanistan). Disagreements among the NATO allies triggered additional questions about the possible impact of the mission in Afghanistan.<sup>56</sup> The press also closely followed the negative consequences of the presence of NATO troops in Afghanistan such as civilian deaths, and was critical of them<sup>57</sup>. Terrorist attacks by the Taliban, such as the kidnapping of the Korean team of doctors and nurses, sparked increasing anxiety about the feasibility of the mission<sup>58</sup>. Importantly, the press raised issues concerning relations between the Polish contingent and their American partners in Afghanistan. *Gazeta Wyborcza* was critical of the absence of Polish generals among the mission’s command structures<sup>59</sup>, and was also bitter about the fact that Polish soldiers

<sup>47</sup> Compare: Dz 22.06.2007 “A Mutiny by Polish Soldiers in Afghanistan?”.

<sup>48</sup> Dz 22.06.2007 “Mutiny of Polish Soldiers in Afghanistan?”, compare: Radio ZET 10.08.2007: “Americans Lent us Hummers that are Worse Equipped, and Thus Broke the Bilateral Agreement”.

<sup>49</sup> Dz 24.06.2007 “Soldiers in Afghanistan had Nervous Breakdown”.

<sup>50</sup> *Shorthand Record of the 41st Sitting of the Sejm*, 11.05.2007, pp. 387, 390.

<sup>51</sup> *Shorthand Record of the 27th Sitting of the Sejm*, 26.10.2006, pp. 138, 140.

<sup>52</sup> Bogdan Zdrojewski (PO), *Shorthand Record of the 41st Sitting of the Sejm*, 11.05.2007, p. 407.

<sup>53</sup> Radosław Sikorski (minister of defense), *Shorthand Record of the 27th Sitting of the Sejm*, 26.10.2006.

<sup>54</sup> Radosław Sikorski (minister of defense), *Ibidem.*; Anna Fotyga (minister of foreign affairs), *Shorthand Record of the 41st Sitting of the Sejm*, 11.05.2007.

<sup>55</sup> Bronisław Komorowski (PO), *Shorthand Record of the 41st Sitting of the Sejm*, 11.05.2007, p.380.

<sup>56</sup> Rz 14.09.2005 “Quarrel Over Afghanistan”; Rz 08.07.2005 “Too Little of Alliance in Afghanistan”; compare: GW 23.10.2006 “Afghan Taliban Bet on Suicide Bombers” – the terrorist methods employed by the Taliban are seen as a sign that the NATO mission is not successful, but on the contrary that it is causing more violence and suffering among the civilian population.

<sup>57</sup> Rz 05.03.2007 “USA Troops Killed Several Civilians”; GW 19.06.2007 “Afghan Children Died in NATO Bombardment”.

<sup>58</sup> GW 23.07.2007 “Taliban Kidnapped and Threaten to Kill Korean Missionaries”; Rz 26.07.2007 “Taliban Kill Hostages”; GW 28.07.2007 “Afghanistan: The Drama of the Koreans”.

<sup>59</sup> GW 19.06.2007 “Polish Soldiers in Afghanistan do not Have Their Generals in NATO Staff”.

and especially high-ranking officers wore American insignias of rank<sup>60</sup>. These issues are worth mentioning because they echoed the general criticism of the uneven relationship between Poland and the US, criticism that could reduce public trust in the US. However, criticism of the inequality in such contexts is not automatically transformed into a negative image of the US as such.

### II.1.3. The threat of terrorism

The war on terror declared by George W. Bush, which in ideological terms justifies and provides a rationale for the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, constitutes a permanent topic in Polish public discourse, although critical opinions of the “war on terror” are also presented.<sup>61</sup> The theme of terrorism appears more often in the international than in the national context, such as when tragic events such as the bomb attacks in Madrid or London are monitored, or when Al-Kaida terrorists are captured<sup>62</sup>. Terrorism is also often mentioned in the context of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.<sup>63</sup> The issue of Islamic fundamentalism has also entered Polish public discourse, together with discussions of world terrorism. Poland was recognized as a target for potential terrorist attacks. Some measures were taken by consecutive governments to ensure institutional backing for preventing terrorism. Apart from special anti-terrorist training and intelligence, financing for combating terrorism was also suggested.<sup>64</sup>

Disagreements among politicians as to whether these efforts were sufficient and/or effective run mainly along political lines (i.e. the opposition blames the government for insufficient efforts or ineffective solutions). However, opinions that the “war on terror” is leading to too much interference in the lives of individuals are rarely heard.

The war on terror became a topic of public discourse in the national context on several occasions. Allegations against the US regarding secret CIA prisons for terrorists in Europe, through which suspects were “processed” and brought to Guantanamo prison, launched a series of debates on the existence of secret prisons in Poland as well as on the desirable scope of cooperation with the US in the sphere of anti-terrorist actions.<sup>65</sup> Poland was named as one of the countries that hosted secret prisons, so this issue leapt to the top of the media agenda. International and Polish NGOs and movements criticized these prisons mostly over the Internet.<sup>66</sup> In the print media, the issue was treated with more reserve and disbelief. The ruling elites were blamed for not offering all the information they possessed to the public. The ethical repercussions of the prisons as well as the potential impact of such practices on Polish security were sometimes discussed, but these discussions rarely led to a heated press debate.<sup>67</sup> By and large, mainstream newspapers – although critical of actions that undermined protection for human rights and calling for the country’s

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<sup>60</sup> GW 28.06.2007 “Polish Soldiers in Afghanistan Wear American Insignia of Rank”.

<sup>61</sup> GW 04.04.2007 “Terrorized by the War on Terror” by Zbigniew Brzeziński: “The Notion of a ‘War on Terror’ has Caused Greater Wounds to the US Than 9/11”; GW 07.10.2006 “And Who is the Terrorist Here?”, interview with Noam Chomsky.

<sup>62</sup> Dz 07.07.2006 “London Remembers the Attacks”; Dz 30.06.2007 “Bombs Were Meant to Kill Hundreds of People in London”; Dz 01.07.2007 “Arrests of Terrorists in Great Britain”; GW 19.07.2007 “Al-Kaida Aims at the US and Great Britain”.

<sup>63</sup> GW 05.02.2007 “Bloody Weekend in Iraq”; Rz 15.06.2007 “Iraq: Terrorists Killed 14 Soldiers”; GW 23.10.2006 “Afghan Taliban Bet on Suicide Bombers”; Rz 23.07.2007 “Taliban Threaten to Kill Foreigners”.

<sup>64</sup> Janusz Kaczmarek (minister of interior and public administration), in: *Shorthand Record of the 45<sup>th</sup> Sitting of the Sejm*, 05.07.2007.

<sup>65</sup> Reactions to information in the European media about secret prisons in Poland: T 06.12.2005 “The Mystery of CIA Flights”; GW 07.12.2005 “Kwaśniewski: There Were no CIA Prisons in Poland”; T 12.12.2005 “Flying Gulag of the CIA”; GW 14.12.2005 “Report of CIA Prisons: ‘Suspensions More Credible’”; Reactions to the confirmation by George W. Bush that secret prisons existed in Europe: GW 07.09.2006 “World Press on Secret CIA Prisons”; GW 19.09.2006 “As an Ally - Lawlessness” by Dawid Warszawski; GW 08.09.2006 “Bush Revealed CIA Prisons to Win Congressional Elections?”; after a report by Dick Marty was published: GW 9-10.06.2007 “We Got a Knock for CIA”.

<sup>66</sup> Amnesty International Poland: <http://amnesty.org.pl/dzialaj/kampanie/stop-torturom-w-wojnie-z-terroryzmem.html>, accessed 26.07.2007

<sup>67</sup> GW 22.09.2005 “Non-Election Security” by Antoni Podolski: the threats posed by terrorism are real and we have to learn to take them seriously.

sovereignty to be protected – viewed the American war on terrorism as sensible and unavoidable:

“Today, a world embittered by the arrogance of Washington may not fully realize how much it needs an America that is militarily and economically strong. The question that remains to be answered is how to use American military and economic power and cultural influence to dry up the swamps that give birth to and support terror in today’s world.”<sup>68</sup>

#### II.1.4. Missile Defense debate

The installation of the US Missile Defense (MD) shield in Poland and the Czech Republic<sup>69</sup> occupied a significant place in the national agenda. Its cooperation with the US makes the latter an ally of Poland and a guarantor of its security, yet increasingly this security guarantee requires an involvement in global confrontational politics, which is increasingly unpredictable and dangerous<sup>70</sup>.

In the Missile Defense debate, the interests of the US and Poland were again juxtaposed, but in a more articulate manner than before. The governing PiS party favored the project because the party had backed plans to have a US military base on Polish territory in the past, and considered this a more solid guarantee of Polish international security. Yet another argument in favor of the Missile Defense system claimed that it would contribute to Polish and European security in a world of increasingly unpredictable threats from “rogue states”. The proponents of the shield emphasized that it would have only a defensive character.

However, opposition parties as well as the two government allies of the PiS were against the shield. The arguments they put forward were the following: the SLD was against the shield because its installation on Polish territory would increase the risk of a preventive attack on Poland<sup>71</sup>. Moreover, the SLD was critical of the way the negotiations with the US had been handled, saying there was too little reciprocity, and that the public and the parliament had not been sufficiently informed. These views were largely supported by the non-parliamentary left and the center-left opposition (e.g. the SdPI, UP and PD).<sup>72</sup> The PO was most critical of the inequality in the partnership between the US and Poland: “On the issue of the shield, the Polish government was treated by the US like some kind of Bantustan [...] the draft of the answer was sent along with the request [by the Americans – A.H.]”.<sup>73</sup> PSL leader Waldemar Pawlak argued that the government’s strategy of basing security exclusively on cooperation with the US was unacceptable. He blamed the US for practicing an aggressive international policy. He also cited Roman Kuźniar as a “victim” of the shield debate, saying he had been suspended from his post as director of the Polish Institute of International Relations (PISM) in 2007 allegedly for criticizing the Missile Defense project. As a private citizen, Roman Kuźniar said during the GW debate:

“Let’s not be in a hurry to make decisions about the shield. There is no threat at the moment; there are no conditions that could force us to make a decision now. Especially given that we have an untrustworthy American government, and on the Polish side

<sup>68</sup> GW 01-02. 07.2006 “Imperialists from Hollywood”, Andrzej Lubowski.

<sup>69</sup> This issue appeared repeatedly on the agenda throughout the period (e.g. Rz 17.11.2007 “A Shield for Poland”; Rz 2006 “Anti-Missile Shield Has to Pay Off for Us”) and reached a particularly prominent place in the spring and summer of 2007 (Rz 15.05.2007 “Rice: This Isn’t a Cold War”, Rz 09.06.2007 “American Shield Closer”; GW 11.06.2007 “Shield – Egotism of the Americans”, interview with Viktor Litowkin).

<sup>70</sup> By the same token, the installation of the missiles on the border with Poland is viewed in the context of the F-16 contract; see e.g. Rz 31.05.2006 “Byelorussian Answer to the F-16”. The most modern Russian missiles are right on the Polish border.

<sup>71</sup> Zbigniew Zaborowski (SLD), in: *Shorthand Record of the 41<sup>st</sup> Sitting of the Sejm*, 11.05.2007, p. 408.

<sup>72</sup> The congruence of opinions can be judged from the records of the debate on the MD in which four left-wing parties participated (SLD, SdPI, UP and PD), and which was organized at the SdPI headquarters on 18.02.2007; Compare: GW 05.06.2007 “Specter of the Left”: “The SLD rejects the building of the shield on the territory of Poland (‘the building of the shield is a threat to our country and could lead to a new arms race’) despite the fact that the Miller and Belka governments pursued a pro-American policy even at the expense of worsening relations with European countries”.

<sup>73</sup> Bronisław Komorowski (PO), in: *Shorthand Record of the 41<sup>st</sup> Sitting of the Sejm*, 11.05.2007, p. 380. Komorowski also attacked the government due to the fact that during his visit to Moscow, the American president told the Russians that they would have an opportunity to visit the base on Polish territory. Komorowski claimed that this was an unacceptably unilateral way of handling the partnership with Poland, and blamed it on the servility and lack of professionalism of the present government.



– I am sorry to say – the least competent foreign and security policy team since 1989.”<sup>74</sup>

Self-Defense, one of the three parties forming the coalition government, was not particularly enthusiastic about the plans to install the MD system in Poland. While avoiding sharp criticism, its members called for a referendum on the issue.<sup>75</sup> The representative of another government coalition party, Janusz Dobrosz (LPR), confessed that the party was divided on the issue of the shield. Judging from the content of *Nasz Dziennik* (see below), the opponents of the project anticipated a potential attack on Poland as well as limitations on Polish sovereignty if a foreign base was built on Polish territory. The national interests of the two countries were presented by LPR politicians as in conflict, with the US portrayed as a country which does not care for anyone else’s interests but its own.

On the issue of the Missile Defense installation in Poland, newspapers such as *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Dziennik* and (to a lesser extent) *Rzeczpospolita* were more skeptical, and presented more cautious opinions than they did on the mission in Iraq or Afghanistan. The government’s strategy in negotiations with the Americans, as well as the extent to which they informed the public, was sharply criticized. For instance, the statement of the Polish president after his meeting with George W. Bush – “The shield is going to be installed because in itself it is good for Poland” – was criticized for undermining negotiations and inviting threats to Poland without even asking for additional protection. The president was also blamed for his servility towards the US.<sup>76</sup> By the same token, journalists and politicians could not refrain from criticism when the prime minister visited the US in 2006:

“Several hours before her meeting with the Polish prime minister, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, without asking her guest, cancelled the press conference they had been supposed to hold together. Similarly, it was not clear until the last moment whether George W. Bush would allow himself to be photographed with Jarosław Kaczyński. In the end, the president gave five minutes to the head of the Polish government”<sup>77</sup>.

Former Minister of Defense Radosław Sikorski, well known for his pro-Americanism, argued in the press that some of the actions of the US were against Poland’s national interests:

“I would warn Americans not to underestimate how much the Polish perception of the US has changed. In the past, when decision-time arrived, Polish politicians said: on security issues, America can be trusted. But after Iraq and the performance of the US Secretary of State [Colin Powell, who in a speech at the UN warned of the threat to world peace posed by Saddam Hussein], we will watch Washington’s proposals more carefully.”<sup>78</sup>

Another often-quoted expert is General Stanisław Koziej, who supported the MD installation in Poland, but also argued that additional security guarantees were needed, such as the Patriot Air Defense System.<sup>79</sup> Yet, it must be emphasized that even *Gazeta Wyborcza*, which is perhaps most skeptical of the three main newspapers about the MD installations in Poland, criticizes US international politics less than it does the national ruling elites who negotiate with the Americans.

*Trybuna* (the newspaper most closely connected to the SLD) is far more critical of the anti-missile shield than are left-wing party representatives:

<sup>74</sup> GW 03.03.2007 “Why do we Need the Anti-Missile Shield?”, debate with Radosław Sikorski, Roman Kuźniar, Bronisław Komorowski. Compare: GW 02.03.2007 “Does Poland Need a Shield?”, by Paweł Wroński.

<sup>75</sup> Mateusz Piskorski (Self-Defense), in: *Shorthand Record of the 41<sup>st</sup> Sitting of the Sejm*, 11.05.2007.

<sup>76</sup> Rz 8.06.2007 “Kaczyński and Bush: Understanding Without Words”, by Sławomir Sierakowski: Kaczyński is called a “vassal” of Bush; GW 11.06.2007 “Hel and Other Elements”, by Tomasz Lis [the play of words in Polish title “Hel i inne pierwiastki” is based on the double meaning of the word *pierwiastek*, which means “element” and thus collocates well with Hel (the geographical name, but also in Polish a word for the gas helium); the second meaning is “square root”, and thus refers to the debate about the method of counting voices in the UE decision-making processes at the time – A.H.].

<sup>77</sup> Rz 23.09.2006 “Alliance without Partnership”, by Jędrzej Bielecki.

<sup>78</sup> GW 03.03.2007 “Gazeta Debate: What do we Need the Shield For?”; compare: *Europa* 30.06.2007 “Polish Security: Do we Need a Missile Shield?”, by Radosław Sikorski.

<sup>79</sup> TVP 1 “Quarter after Eight”, 18.07.2007, interview with General Stanisław Koziej and Grzegorz Kostrzewa-Zorbas.



“If we will be the participants of this system, we can automatically become the target of the retaliation, including nuclear one.”<sup>80</sup>

The editor-in-chief of *Krytyka Polityczna* represented the US as guided exclusively by self-interest, like a ruthless businessman. The newspaper explained the installation of the MD system in Poland as due to the lower costs of doing it outside the US. The costs were portrayed as both economic and related to security, and Kuźniar’s argument that the MD system has an offensive character was repeated<sup>81</sup>.

As in debates about Iraq and Afghanistan, the most critical anti-American voices came from the far-right. In *Nasz Dziennik*, alongside criticism similar to that found in other newspapers (e.g. the need for more reciprocity from the Americans, and for additional benefits for Poles such as visas)<sup>82</sup>, some articles presented Americans as unpredictable, ruthless, egotistic – not the kind of partner that can be relied on. Some articles offered an apocalyptic vision of the outcome of the Missile Defense installation on Polish territory:

“In case of an attack on the US, American defense installations will be attacked first, including those elements of the shield in Poland and the Czech Republic. This means not only potential material losses to the Polish side, but also losses of human life – the lives of Poles [...] By cooperating more closely with the US, we allow the American government indirectly to steer Polish foreign policy. We do not answer Russian arguments with Polish arguments. [...]”

If the prognoses about the end of the present dollar system are true, it is possible that the other method of exercising power will be used – war. Americans are pursuing a policy of globalization

that will build a single global state in one or two generations.”<sup>83</sup>

Here, interestingly, the argument often used to criticize the EU (the threat to national sovereignty), was turned against the US. Of course, these arguments do not constitute mainstream public discourse, and are only presented here to illustrate the extent of negative arguments.

In summary, the arguments presented about installing the MD system in Poland that have the greatest potential for reducing Polish pro-Americanism is the following. The US does not care about Polish national security but only about its own security, and thus downplays the significance of Russia’s blackmailing of Poland. US self-interest is a significant potential source of anti-American sentiment.

## II. 2. *The US as a model for Poland*

Attitudes to the US are to a considerable extent formed not only by co-operation with the US but also by the tendency to present the US as a model. However, the relationship between the readiness to take the US as a model and the overall positive attitude to America is difficult to traceable and is more complex than the relationship between the benefits of cooperation and pro-American attitudes. Moreover, the American model itself is changing. First, many commentators draw attention to the fact that the US is a divided country<sup>84</sup>. Second, the mainstream America of today differs from the mainstream America of 20 years ago due to the challenges posed by the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, public opinion tends not to take into account the actual and rather complex situation in a given country, but instead draws from stereotypical images of that country. For instance, “in European political culture, the stereotype of the US is that

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<sup>80</sup> T 24.11.2005 [Subtitle:] Anti-Missiles: Poland in US Military Chariot [Title:] “We Will be a Target.”

<sup>81</sup> Rz 19.03.2007 “Before we Build an Anti-Missile Shield”, by Sławomir Sierakowski (editor-in-chief of *Krytyka Polityczna*).

<sup>82</sup> ND 05.02.2007 “Anti-Missile Shield – Opportunity or Threat?”; ND 21-22.04.2007 “Decision on Shield Without Referendum”; ND 25.04.2007 “Shield for Common Security”; “Visas are Basic Condition in Talks on Shield”, by Mateusz Piskorski (Self-Defense).

<sup>83</sup> ND 22.06.2007 “Let’s Not Create a New Leviathan” by Jan Łopuszanski; ND 13.06.2007 “Poland – A Victim of the Fight for a Global Empire?”, by Cyprian Pogonowski.

<sup>84</sup> GW 20.11.2006 “Republicans, Polish-Style”, comment by Tomasz Lis.

of an arrogant Texan cowboy”.<sup>85</sup> In Polish collective imagery, the US enjoys a positive stereotype as a country of freedom and democracy. In the following sections, the American model will be considered in the context of several public debates on politics and society.

### II.2.1. American democracy and political institutions

The US has been treated as a point of reference during the transition from Communism to liberal democracy and the construction of democratic institutions. By and large, US democracy is perceived as a blueprint for Polish democracy (even though the Polish political system is closer to European systems than to the rather unique American one). However, at the level of imagery, America is one of the key symbols of democratic values in Poland.

Disillusion with American democracy is far less acute among Poland’s symbolic elites than among their Western counterparts, despite numerous disappointments with America’s national politics. Therefore, attacks on the US are interpreted more often as attacks on liberal democracy itself than as sincere criticism of negative trends in American democracy:

“Eastern Europeans know how anti-democratic and anti-liberal forces use anti-Americanism. [...] In hating Americans, we hate liberalism”.<sup>86</sup>

However, these negative tendencies have been noticed by Polish press. The slow rise of negative attitudes towards the US has been exacerbated by the unpopularity of President George W. Bush among Poland’s symbolic elites. At the same time, negative attitudes towards the Law and Justice ruling party dominate among the symbolic elites. Law and

Justice has repeatedly emphasized its conservative ideology and its affinity to the Republican ideology and way of doing politics. They also claimed to have “special relations” with the George W. Bush administration. Although it might not be the main factor, how the US is evaluated during the final years of the George W. Bush presidency will to a certain extent depend on the extent to which his policies and ideology are associated with the ruling Law and Justice party.<sup>87</sup>

Criticism comes from the center as well as from the far right and far left. The editor-in-chief of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Adam Michnik, quoted Zbigniew Brzeziński, whom he considers the most trusted authority on trans-Atlantic relations. Brzeziński blames a combination of stupidity and fanaticism for the deterioration of the US image in the world:

“[It is] the stupidity of particular high-ranking officials, i.e. a very simplified vision of the world that has become even more rigid due to the fears triggered by 9/11. On the other hand we have the fanaticism of the neo-conservatives who are closely connected to the Likud party in Israel. [...] There is a fanatic and exceptionally stupid right wing in America. It is a Christian right, which has nothing in common with the neo-conservatives. [...] It is this right that can undermine the position of the US in the world with its stupidity and its fanaticism, and sometimes even worse – with its stupid fanaticism.”<sup>88</sup>

Neither the international nor the domestic politics of George W. Bush are popular with the center-left media, which sympathize with the Democrats. *Gazeta Wyborcza* perceives an affinity between the political turn towards conservatism in the US and the victory of the political right in Poland. The conservatism and the political line of the ruling party, Law and

<sup>85</sup> Garton Ash, Timothy. *Wolny świat. Dlaczego kryzys Zachodu jest szansą naszych czasów* [Free World: Why the Crisis of the West Reveals the Opportunity of our Time. 2004]. Żnak, Kraków, 2005, p. 80. Compare: In identifying the cowboy attitude as a part of the American dream, Jeremy Rifkin states: “...the world is too small for six billion lonely cowboys.” (In GW 18.11.2005); George W. Bush and his style of international politics are called “cowboyish” (GW 1-2.07.2006 “Imperialists From Hollywood”, by Andrzej Lubowski: the US president is blamed for cowboy rhetoric in the Abu Ghraib scandal: “Anti-Americanism is nothing new, yet the language and politics of the George W. Bush administration have made it unprecedented in scope, and have solidified the stereotype of Americans as arrogant and egocentric”; GW 18.07.2006 “Cowboy Diplomacy”).

<sup>86</sup> GW 26-27.05.2007 “How to Unite the West?”, Ivan Krašev.

<sup>87</sup> Compare: Rz 8.06.2007 “Kaczyński and Bush: Understanding without Words”, by Sławomir Sierakowski.

<sup>88</sup> GW 19.05.2006 “Zbig, or Classic Democratic Politics”, by Adam Michnik, from a speech he gave during the ceremony to award Zbigniew Brzeziński as the newspaper’s Man of the Year.

Justice, is called American. A GW journalist stated: “Conservative America is an ideal to which Poland has to aspire in the name of Christian values.”<sup>89</sup> A famous TV journalist claimed in his regular column in GW: “Lately, Polish politics are very reminiscent of American politics, although only that part that has undergone the most degradation.”<sup>90</sup> However, the US is not completely identified with the current politics of the Bush administration. The center-right mainstream newspapers evaluate the conservatism of American politics more positively (e.g. *Dziennik*) and consider the public debates on values and religion to be a positive feature of American politics (e.g. *Rzeczpospolita*).

What center and center-left commentators regard as a temporary negative trend in American politics, the commentators of *Nasz Dziennik* and *Krytyka Polityczna* see as a threat to democracy not only in the US but also worldwide. Paradoxically, far-right and new-left media agree that the politics of George W. Bush are authoritarian and dangerously servile to the interests of oil-hungry corporations feeding the arms race. Both media believe the neo-conservative ideology has an excessive influence over US politics. Additionally, in *Nasz Dziennik*, this criticism has “anti-Zionist” (i.e. anti-Israeli) and anti-Semitic overtones. *Krytyka Polityczna*, on the other hand, grounds its anti-American position in pacifism and alternative globalism as well as participatory democracy and minority rights.

It should be emphasized, however, that the negative views of American democracy presented above are outside the mainstream Polish media discourse. Anti-Americanism is ridiculed as something that has become suddenly fashionable and therefore banal.<sup>91</sup> Mockery and criticism of anti-Americanism represent displays of anti-anti-Americanism. For example, Tony Judt was called “the missionary of shallow anti-Americanism” in the response to his

interview in GW, in line with arguments that mock radical anti-American opinions:

“America is a threat to the world because it is arrogant. ‘Americans are much less capable of self-criticism than other societies’. [...] America is really repulsive because it is patriotic. It has not learnt the lesson of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which in Judt’s view is that ‘patriotism and nationalism led to mass murder and genocide’. If someone stated that ‘mass murder and genocide are a logical consequence of progress and socialism’, the New York historian would have started writing protest letters. However, in the struggle against the American empire of evil, even the most absurd simplifications are allowed.”<sup>92</sup>

The unilateralism of the US is often excused by citing its attempt to foster democracy around the world, although Polish commentators are aware that it is impossible to apply one model of democracy world-wide. Disagreements with the simplistic model of exporting democracy are couched in the form of friendly advice rather than bitter mockery. Attempts by Europe to take a benevolent approach to loud critics of the US such as Lukashenko of Belarus or Hugo Chavez of Venezuela rarely find sympathy among mainstream journalists.<sup>93</sup>

“It’s hard to get rid of the impression that anti-Americanism, especially the Western European variety, also serves as a diversion. It helps remove two large unresolved problems from the agenda [of the EU]: the crisis of the welfare state, and the assimilation of the quickly-growing Muslim community in the [European] Union.”<sup>94</sup>

American-style freedom of speech is highly valued in the Polish media. Comparisons between the media laws of the US and Poland often favor the former. Intriguingly, even in articles that invite an anti-American line of argument (e.g. the fate of the American journalist who revealed the secret CIA

<sup>89</sup> GW 06.09.2006 “American Pattern of PiS”, Łukasz Cichy.

<sup>90</sup> GW 20.11.2006 “Republicans, Polish-Style”, comment by Tomasz Lis.

<sup>91</sup> GW 13.07.2007 “Liberty Statue in a Sea of Blood” by Robert Sankowski, [sub-title:] “Anti-Americanism is Fashionable”: the author claims that music producers seek profit by using anti-American references.

<sup>92</sup> GW 13.06.2007 “Moralizer Tony Judt”, Marcin Bosacki, editor of the foreign news department of GW; the interview with Tony Judt by Artur Domosławski was published in GW 26-27.05.2007 “Useful Idiots of Bush”.

<sup>93</sup> GW 12.06.2006 “Don’t Flirt with Castro, Europe”: criticism of putting politics above democratic ideals.

<sup>94</sup> GW 1-2.07.2006 “Imperialists from Hollywood”, Andrzej Lubowski.



prisons in Poland), Polish journalists find something to admire in American political culture:

“In Poland, any journalist who put forward such a sensational thesis as Dana Priest would have been mocked. They would have been dismissed as unreliable, and their work would have been treated with reserve. [...] Here we touch upon the difference in the treatment of journalists in the US and in Poland. There, it is the journalist who is trusted, and not those in power [ruling politicians].”<sup>95</sup>

The American political system has been the topic of media debates on everything from the party system and voting mechanism to the quality of America’s political elites. In the last two years, American election campaigns were often discussed in the Polish media.<sup>96</sup> This could be due to the fact that there were three elections during the last two years in Poland (parliamentary and presidential elections in 2005 and local elections in 2006), so the American primaries in this context were viewed as a gauge to measure Poland’s achievements and shortcomings. The style of campaigning in the two countries was compared, and sometimes it was argued that the Polish electoral race should be Americanized.<sup>97</sup> The notion of “Americanization” has negative connotations in political marketing, because it means campaigns that are focused on form and not on content, and that depend on “big money”. Yet, most Polish media associate the American style of conducting election campaigns with a style of politics that have been proven to work for the flagship of global democracy – the US. During the local election campaign in 2006, the Americanization of Polish political campaigning took the form of plagiarism – the two leading parties, the PO and PiS, ran political ads that were almost identical copies of the Republicans’ campaigns from 2004 and 1984, respectively.<sup>98</sup>

Polish media commentators were generally embarrassed by the lack of inventiveness this showed. However, in their reaction to the lament that Polish election campaigns were becoming increasingly dirty, these commentators argued that Polish politicians had still long way to go if they wanted “to become like the US”:

“Observers of the Polish political scene often refer to America, writing that these or those practices from over the Vistula would not be appreciated over the ocean. In reality, American politics are far more brutal than the Polish variety.”<sup>99</sup>

## II.2.2. The American penitentiary system and courts

There is no consensus in Polish public discourse on whether the US legal system is ideal or faulty. Some commentators praise America’s independent courts, especially the Supreme Court, as the backbone of US democracy.<sup>100</sup> Others blame the American legal system for the proliferation of absurd cases where lawyers seek to make money by “defending” their clients from evil shop owners who had not warned shoppers that the floor could be slippery, etc.

Some legal initiatives by Polish politicians in the last two years were inspired by the American court and penitentiary system models. This was probably due to the fact that the lack of personal security and the threat of crime were among Polish voters’ top concerns. In interviews, politicians sometimes mentioned that the legal formula they planned to introduce in Poland worked well in some Western countries, the US included. In their election programs, the PO and PiS proposed the introduction of 24-hour or 48-hour courts for minor offences

<sup>95</sup> GW 24.04.2006 “The CIA’s Flying Prisons”, Andrzej Morozowski.

<sup>96</sup> Rz 28.12.2005 “The Second Youth of John McCain”, Rz 02.02.2007 “Gaffe of a Candidate for the USA Presidency”; Rz 03.04.2007 “Mrs. Clinton Raises Millions”, Rz 21.06.2007 “Bloomberg for President?” and others.

<sup>97</sup> Political celebrities appear in various contexts, from Hillary Clinton attacking Rumsfeld on US policy in Iraq (Rz 05.08.2006 “Difficult Questions for Rumsfeld”) to election campaign strategies (Rz 06.06.2007 “The Hillary and Bill Clinton show”).

<sup>98</sup> GW 06.07.2006 “PiS Had Eyes on Reagan in Their Ad”; Dz 06.07.2006 “PiS Copied Reagan’s Ad”; GW 04.09.2006 “TV Advertising of PO is a Copy of Bush Ad”.

<sup>99</sup> GW 03.10.2005 “Dirty Campaign, American Style”; see also blog of GW correspondent in Washington, Marcin Gadziński, “Biały Domek” [Little White House] at <http://bialydommek.blox.pl/html>, accessed 25.07.2007, especially the entry “The Tears of McCain’s Daughter”: “it’s worth remembering how ruthless, brutal and disgusting an election campaign can be”.

<sup>100</sup> Rz 17.07.2005 “The Court Over Courts”, Piotr Gillert.



like hooliganism. After the elections, the PiS put this idea into practice. Among the less-known initiatives, Minister of Justice Zbigniew Ziobro (PiS) suggested introducing the institution of “turning state’s evidence”, modeled on the US experience of combating organized crime<sup>101</sup>. Other American approaches to crime inspired Polish politicians as well. Minister of Education Roman Giertych (LPR) claimed that the policy of “zero tolerance” he was about to introduce at schools was modeled on the program launched by Rudolph Giuliani, the mayor of New York, which – according to the minister – had greatly reduced crime in the city.<sup>102</sup> This tough stand on crime, typical of conservative politicians, was however criticized in the left-wing media as a smoke screen masking the real problems affecting contemporary liberal democratic states that are unable to protect their citizens from recurrent economic crises and terrorist threats.<sup>103</sup>

In July 2007, a debate about the compatibility of the Polish and American legal systems was sparked by the failed efforts to have Edward Mazur extradited from the US.<sup>104</sup> Mazur, a Polish businessman residing in the US, had been charged by a Polish prosecutor with ordering the murder of General Marek Papała, the chief of police, in 1998.<sup>105</sup> The details of the debate are irrelevant, but its rhetoric demonstrates a more general trend in public discourse. The opposition (PO and SLD) blamed the government for the unprofessional and insufficient preparation of the extradition application, as well as for bringing politics into the matter<sup>106</sup>. Such views also appeared in some newspapers, such as *Gazeta Wyborcza*.<sup>107</sup> Other media (e.g. *Rzeczpospolita*) suggested that the independence of American judges had to be respected by Polish

public opinion, but also claimed that further legal steps should be taken.<sup>108</sup> The arguments of Justice Minister Zbigniew Ziobro were illustrative of the pro-Americanism of the ruling party. Despite the fact that he had earlier let his American partners know that this was a very important case for his government, Ziobro did not attack the American judge for ruling against Mazur’s extradition. In other words, he refrained from using an argument that could have helped him save face inside the country for the sake of preserving a good image for the US.

## II. 2. 3. The American social model

“The purpose of power is to create conditions for people in which they can attain happiness by themselves”<sup>109</sup>. This statement outlines the American social model as relying very little on support from the state and leaving a lot of freedom and risk to individuals.

The American social model has not been particularly popular as a blueprint for Polish social reforms since the election campaign of 2005. In their political program, the winning right-wing PiS party made many propositions typically associated with the model of state interventionism. The term “liberalism” was given negative connotations in speeches given by the members of several parties such as the LPR, Self-Defense, and particularly the PiS, which compared “Solidarity Poland” to “Liberal Poland” in their election slogans and the campaign as a whole. These slogans were aimed at their strongest rival, the PO, the only party that suggested an election program containing some elements of liberal economic and social solutions (e.g. a flat tax). The party that traditionally

<sup>101</sup> The official site of Zbigniew Ziobro contains his opinions and press interviews: <http://www.zbigniewziobro.pl/>, accessed 26.07.2007

<sup>102</sup> Dz 30.10.2006 “I Will Punish Teachers and Pupils”.

<sup>103</sup> *Le Monde Diplomatique Polska* no.8, October 2006 “On Several Fairytales about Security from America” by Loic Wacquant.

<sup>104</sup> GW 20.07.2007 “Ziobro: Mazur’s Road to Poland is Not Yet Closed”; ND 21-22.07.2007 “The Extradition of Mazur Will Not Take Place”.

<sup>105</sup> GW 25.10.2006 “Murder of Papała – Traces from Eight Years Ago”.

<sup>106</sup> ND 21-22.07.2007 “Extradition of Mazur Will Not Take Place”.

<sup>107</sup> GW 23.07.2007 “Mazur Free. Everyone Shocked”, “MA Ziobro and Prof. Keys”; Dz 11.08.2007 “I Was Right in Saying that Ziobro was a ‘Zero’”, interview with Leszek Miller, former prime minister for the SLD, who blamed the government for a lack of professionalism.

<sup>108</sup> Rz 20.07.2007 “In a Year – at the Latest – Mazur Could Be in Poland”.

<sup>109</sup> GW 11-12.03.2006 “Union has to be for People”, interview with Bronisław Geremek.

promoted liberal economic politics – the UW, now the PD – did not win seats in parliament.<sup>110</sup> The other opposition parties – the SLD and PSL – are a post-communist left-wing grouping and a peasant party, respectively, both favoring European state welfare models over liberal models.

In the press there was some criticism of the European social model for turning people into consumers<sup>111</sup> as well as arguments favoring it on roughly the same grounds.<sup>112</sup> Direct references to the American social model were less common. Media debates on the particular solutions offered by the US in the sphere of social policy, such as private health care, are relatively rare, and tend to be disapproving of the American model or at least skeptical of it.<sup>113</sup> The general tone of these debates is as follows: “We cannot afford to liberalize the health-care system”.<sup>114</sup> Bitter critiques of the American social model, however, are primarily “imported”: famous experts from abroad are invited for interviews, or foreign articles are re-printed in Polish newspapers.<sup>115</sup> Thus we can conclude that the American social model was seldom a topic in Polish public discourse during the last two years.

### II.3. *The US as a society*

US society is a topic of continuous if not lively discussion in the Polish media. American worldviews on important issues and daily habits are monitored and

compared to those of the Poles, especially on such issues as race relations, multiculturalism, religious values and contacts between the two societies.

#### II.3.1. Commonality of values

In Polish media discourse, American values tend to receive positive treatment. According to public opinion polls, Poles and Americans have similar religious values and are conservative in matters of sex and marriage.<sup>116</sup> Thus, the media discourse also pays attention to these issues. This affinity between moral values and the high degree of religiosity is seen as a stable ground for Polish pro-Americanism and for reciprocity from Americans.<sup>117</sup> In *Ozon*, a right-wing weekly, similarities between the values the two societies endorse are praised:

“One thing that distinguishes Poles from Europeans, but unites them with Americans, is the degree of religious awakening and the strong presence of Christianity in the public sphere. Both the US and Poland to a large extent resisted the secularization that so powerfully affected the spiritual image of Western Europe. American and Polish churches are full in contrast with empty temples in France, Germany, Benelux and Scandinavia. [...] The common foundation for the US as well as Poland is a freedom-loving policy and a tradition of tolerance.”<sup>118</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Compare: GW 06.04.2006 “Why Capitalism Should Be Loved”, debate with Leszek Balcerowicz (former president of the Polish central bank and minister of finance for the UW): “It’s insane to love the welfare state, it only creates unemployment”.

<sup>111</sup> ND 26.07.2007 “Let’s Not Allow the EU to Become a Paternalistic Regime”, interview with Zdzisław Krasnodębski. *Europa* 24.08.2005 “Who Will Set the Tone for the West?”, by Marcin Król.

<sup>112</sup> GW 18.11.2005 “Don’t Let Americans Smooth-Talk You”, interview with Jeremy Rifkin: “most Europeans try to maintain a balance between work and leisure time, they don’t want to just work as Americans do”; Compare: Leonard, Mark. *Europa odkryta na nowo. [Europe Rediscovered]*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw, 1999: the author suggests that the European identity could be based on quality of life (less work, more leisure time, etc.) compared to the American model, which is based on hard work.

<sup>113</sup> Compare: Rz 20.07.2007 “American Health-Care System Sick”; GW 18.11.2005 “Don’t Let Americans Smooth-Talk You”, interview with Jeremy Rifkin.

<sup>114</sup> GW 02.07.2007 “Barbie Won’t Cure Us”, by Elżbieta Cichońska: “Americans neither live the longest among nations, nor do they have the lowest infant mortality, or feel safe when they face health problems. Four million American citizens don’t have medical insurance. Can we afford a liberalization of our health-care system?”

<sup>115</sup> GW 18.11.2005 “Don’t Let Americans Smooth-Talk You”, interview with Jeremy Rifkin.

<sup>116</sup> Rz 07.08.2006 “How Much Do We Like America?”, Krzysztof Zagórski; see also: Wenzel Michał and Krzysztof Zagórski, The Choice of the Poles – American vs. European Social Models. In: Kolarska-Bobińska, Lena, Jacek Kucharczyk and Piotr M. Kaczyński (eds). *Op.cit.*, pp.77-80

<sup>117</sup> Dz 18.09.2006 “Poland Deserves Reciprocity From the USA”, by Gary Schmitt: “Poland is brought closer to the US by many issues, including the religiosity of our societies, which is stronger than in other Western democracies.”

<sup>118</sup> *Ozon* 06.07.2006 “Poles, or Martians on Venus”, by Grzegorz Górny. Compare: Rz 24.02.2007 “What Poland is Needed For”, by Michał Szuldrzyński: “A strong Polish identity nurtured on religion and politics is a conservative alternative to the Western European version of liberal democracy”.

Clearly, in this quotation the US is identified with its more conservative elements, and support for the country is based on the author's worldviews. In contrast to these opinions, the liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza* stated in an article devoted to sex in America:

"It's clear that at the root of American society lies some kind of religious fanaticism. The affair surrounding the Kinsey report illustrates this point well. For us [Europeans], the statement that people enjoy making love has never had such explosive power. [...] American literature did not 'discover' that children are not brought by a stork until the 20th century, at some point between Hemingway and Henry Miller. We might say that in order to make this discovery, American writers had to go to Paris"<sup>119</sup>

Thus, those who adhere to liberal worldviews will tend to take a negative view of the conservative values and religiosity of Americans<sup>120</sup>. These lines of division run through debates on euthanasia, abortion and the rights of sexual minorities. Poland's pro-American liberal media seek proximity with the US on such values as pluralism, tolerance, and the history of the struggle for human rights.

Polish views of the US as a country with similar values contrast with sporadic attempts to construct the US as the opposite of Poland. In earlier press debates, the otherness of the US was sometimes noted by experts and intellectuals. For example, a commentator criticized "the uncritical adoration of successful people, ambitious egotists, supermen who are characterized by ruthlessness and a rather mediocre intelligence."<sup>121</sup> However, negative opinions of American values are usually outweighed by opinions presenting Americans as able to achieve what they want, as trusting themselves and their communities, and as generally optimistic and "a happy and rich nation".<sup>122</sup>

The American experience of the co-existence of many nations and races in one "melting pot" is regarded as having had a special influence on the American value system. Views on this issue vary. Some in the media regard multiculturalism as an illustration of the American way of life or American values. However, American multiculturalism was put under the microscope in the Polish press when the Katrina hurricane caused a human disaster in New Orleans that revealed racial contrasts and the inequality of opportunities in the face of a natural disaster and its consequences:

"New Orleans had 460,000 inhabitants. Nobody knows how many there are now – it is estimated that the number is about 250,000. More people will come, but it is doubtful that in the next decade the city will return to its former size. The racial composition will also change. Although the water and the wind did not destroy only black districts, when the bulldozers clear the rubble and new houses arise, few of the former black inhabitants will be able to afford them."<sup>123</sup>

The inability of the US to solve its problem with racial heterogeneity had also been criticized earlier as a particularly American malaise, and was juxtaposed with the success (however questionable today, after the racial conflicts in France in 2005) of the European model<sup>124</sup>. Yet, commentators also tend to caricature, criticize and refute views such as the following: "The American culture and way of life is the incarnation of evil, decadence, hedonism and rampant individualism":

"Obsessive and sick anti-Americanism spoils the appetite for serious analysis, and sometimes – when combined with ignorance and amnesia – renders such analysis impossible. Speeches about American imperialism sound particularly hypocritical in a Europe that knows something about imperialism, and

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<sup>119</sup> GW [*Wysokie Obcasy*] 02.03.2005 "American Society in the Time of Alfred Kinsey", Wojciech Orliński.

<sup>120</sup> Compare: GW 19.05.2006 "Zbig, or Classic Democratic Politics", by Adam Michnik, who quotes Zbigniew Brzezinski's opinion that "when one travels by car, especially in the southern states, one constantly hears sermons by crank preachers speaking about Apocalypses or Armageddon, and quoting the most bloody and petrifying pieces of the Old Testament out of context. It's a kind of psychopathology."

<sup>121</sup> GW 11.08.2003 "Will We Demoralize Europe?" Jacek Bocheński.

<sup>122</sup> *Polish Radio, Program 1*, 06.06.2007, interview with Zbigniew Lewicki on alternative globalization protests.

<sup>123</sup> GW 30.08.2006 "A Year After Katrina", Andrzej Lubowski.

<sup>124</sup> GW 26-27.06.2004 "Is America Straying from Europe?", Andrzej Walicki.



where memories of colonial Britain, Spain, Holland, Germany, Belgium and Portugal still arouse nostalgia.”<sup>125</sup>

Positive attitudes to the US decidedly set the tone of the mainstream public debate on American values. For students of public discourse, an intriguing feature of these generally positive representations of the US in the Polish press is that they are constructed by means of irony or sarcasm on the basis of anti-American representations from the Western European media, and are presented as a negation of the latter.

### II. 3. 2. First-hand contacts

The emigration of Poles to the US played a crucial role in bringing these societies closer.<sup>126</sup> The US has been the destination of many Polish emigrants over the last century and a half, and American Poles and the issue of Polish emigrants in the US appear in the media regularly<sup>127</sup>. Politicians from the left and the right try to win the support of American Poles in various ways, and try to keep good relations with American Poles as potential voters. To increase the potential of the US electorate, a draft resolution considered the issue of double citizenship<sup>128</sup>. Parliament also initiated the Polish American Youth Exchange Program, a public diplomacy project that promotes closer contacts between Polish and

American students<sup>129</sup>. The allegedly anti-Polish attitudes of American Jews and attempts to change these attitudes also appear sporadically in media debates<sup>130</sup>. Additionally, in the period analyzed, the issue of American Jews who claimed compensation for lost property from Poland appeared on the agenda<sup>131</sup>, producing some anti-American ferment in the far-right media.

The history of Polish emigration to America also means that discussions about US emigration laws have a stable place in the Polish media. Some human interest stories appeared in which Poles suffered negative consequences from American emigration regulations<sup>132</sup>. The fates of other immigrants were also followed with a lot of sympathy and American immigration laws were called “inhuman”.<sup>133</sup> Despite criticism of inhumane regulations, in these stories the US remained a magnet that attracts people.

Media debate continuously returns to the issue of the visa waiver program. This issue appeared in public discourse alongside the decision of the Polish government to take part in the intervention in Iraq as part of the anti-Hussein coalition in 2003. This issue influences views of relations between Poland and the US since it clearly demonstrates the asymmetry in ties between the two countries.<sup>134</sup> The way in which conditions for the cancellation of the visa requirement were formulated in the bill connected

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<sup>125</sup> GW 1-2.07.2006 “Imperialists from Hollywood”, by Andrzej Lubowski.

<sup>126</sup> Michałek, Krzysztof, “The Quest for the New Kolchida – The Origins of Pro-Americanism in Poland from 1918 to 1989”, in: Kolarska-Bobińska, Lena, Jacek Kucharczyk and Piotr M. Kaczyński (eds.), *Op.cit.*; Compare: Dz 18.09.2006 “Poland Deserves Reciprocity from the USA”, by Gary Schmitt: “Poland is brought closer to the US by many issues: Polish emigration to America...”.

<sup>127</sup> Rz 26.04.2006 “President Bush and Polonia Lobby Together”; Rz 14.09.2006 “The government promises Polonia more rights”.

<sup>128</sup> Paweł Kowal (deputy foreign minister), in: *Shorthand Record of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Sitting of the Sejm*, 13.06.2007, p. 111.

<sup>129</sup> *Shorthand Record of the 16<sup>th</sup> Sitting of the Sejm*, 25.04.2006, p. 45 and the following.

<sup>130</sup> Rz 24.04.2006 “Jews in the US Support the Polish Government” (on changing the name of concentration camps); Rz 19.06.2006 “President Overthrows Anti-Polish Myths”; Rz 27.03.2007 “Country ‘Touched by Anti-Semitism’” (Rz protests the view expressed in the American press); Rz 31.05.2007 “How to Attract Young Jews to Poles”.

<sup>131</sup> Rz 09.11.2006 “Expectation of a Compromise with Poland”: Jewish organizations on the return of property; Rz 03.02.2007 “Leaders of American Jews: Time has Come for Compensations from Poland”; Rz 16.04.2007 “Senate Supports the Claims of Jews”.

<sup>132</sup> Rz 04.04.2006 [Title:] “Immigrants – Guests of America or Criminals” [Subtitle:] New Law Covers Thousands of Poles who Stay Illegally; Rz 26.02.2007 “America at Any Price”; the story of the Wasilewski family, in which a mother who was staying in the US illegally was deported with her little son, despite the fact that the father was a US citizen: Rz 11.06.2006 “Thrown Out of America”; Rz 13.06.2007 “A Pole Fights for his Wife”.

<sup>133</sup> Rz 26.06.2007 “A Cuban Woman Fights an Inhuman Law”.

<sup>134</sup> See for example: Rz 28.09.2005 “[Visa] Lottery Not for Us”, Rz 08.02.2006 “Visas, Military Assistance and Common Fears”, Rz 18.05.2006 “Poles to US without Visas?”



the issue directly with the presence of Polish troops in Iraq and Afghanistan<sup>135</sup>. Political parties treated this issue rather pragmatically. The governing party promised it would succeed in negotiating the issue with the US thanks to the “special partnership” the two countries enjoyed in the area of security. They also implied that they had the support of the Republicans, which was not quite accurate since the Republicans were divided on the issue of migration as well as on new security laws. After some changes were made that dashed Polish hopes (the new bill set a ceiling of 10% of visa applications refused as a condition for participating in the visa waiver program), a PiS politician stated:

“Such a policy is just about the easiest way the US could choose to exhaust the enthusiasm of Poles towards Americans – an enthusiasm that is diminishing anyway. I expect George W. Bush, who supports visa waivers for Polish citizens, to help solve this problem.”<sup>136</sup>

The opposition took every opportunity to claim that the negative developments were the result of clumsy diplomacy by the ruling party.<sup>137</sup> Thus, the divisions within political discourse on this issue are partly pragmatic and partly ideological. The media debate on this issue was more heated. The popular press played the part of Robin Hood in accusing Americans of selfishness and unilateralism. Opinion newspapers moderately supported the idea of extending the visa waiver program to Poland. Among the latter, *Gazeta Wyborcza* was the most skeptical about the importance of the issue, while *Rzeczpospolita* and *Dziennik*

took it more seriously. Although the passage below is ironical in tone, its authors inadvertently demonstrated that the issue was being treated in the press as a symbolic measure of the good will the US showed in relations with Poland:

“Never before have so many owed so much to a tiny group of heroes [...] Today these words come to mind when we read that the US might cancel visas for Poles. It turns out that Poles will owe this boon to two heroic tabloids, *SuperExpress* and *Fakt*. *SuperExpress* presents this issue as a personal one for its editorial staff, and leads off an article on the issue as follows: ‘For many years, *SuperExpress* has struggled for the cancellation of visas to the US for Poles. We didn’t want privileges, we wanted normal treatment. Today, we are very close to such a decision.’ Yes, they struggled, and struggling, won in the end. *SuperExpress* trots out some of its old articles as proof. Two are entitled: *Selfish Friends* and *To Hell with Such Allies*. We can be sure these texts had a positive impact, because nothing persuades Americans more than a good beating.”<sup>138</sup>

Although some experts warn that the debate was wrongly formulated<sup>139</sup>, it provided an excellent illustration of the asymmetry in relations between these strategic partners, since it allowed the media to run human interest stories. The debate was thus an emotional one: the need of equality in relations between the two countries was postulated, and the countries were personified so they could be treated as people (e.g. “friend”, “ally”). At the same time, the complex systemic and historical limitations of American immigration policy and law were ignored<sup>140</sup>, thus

<sup>135</sup> The Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006 was accepted by the US Senate on May 26, 2006, but was later rejected by Congress. The bill did not mention Poland, but put forward three conditions a country had to meet in order to be considered for the visa waiver program: “(i) the country is a member of the European Union; (ii) the country is providing material support to the United States or the multilateral forces in Afghanistan or Iraq, as determined by the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of State; and (iii) the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State, determines that the participation of the country in the visa waiver program under this section does not compromise the law enforcement interests of the United States.” <http://www.congress.gov/cgi-bin/query/F?c109:2:./temp/-c109SVMg9N:e60841;> accessed 24.07.2007.

<sup>136</sup> Paweł Zalewski (PiS), comment in: Rz 27.07.2007, p. A6.

<sup>137</sup> Rz 27.07.2007 “Poland Loses the Battle for Visas”, Piotr Gillert.

<sup>138</sup> GW 23.05.2006 “Superfacts about Visas to Paradise”, Jerzy Skolas, Witold Beres.

<sup>139</sup> For instance, Adam Rotfeld, former minister of foreign affairs, postulated that it is irresponsible to make important issues of Polish security such as the Missile Defense system conditional on an issue like the visa waiver program, which has a completely different and rather symbolic nature. Rotfeld participated in the debate on the Missile Defense system organized by the coalition of four left wing parties, SLD, SdPI, PD and UP, popularly known as “The Left and the Democrats” (LiD) on 18.02.2007, at the headquarters of the SdPI, see: <http://www.sdpl.org.pl/index.php/ida/233/>, accessed 8.08.2007.

<sup>140</sup> The term used by Theo van Leeuwen, a critical discourse analyst. See: van Leeuwen, Theo, “The Representation of Social Actors”, in: Caldas-Coulthard, Carmen-Rosa and Malcolm Coulthard (eds.). *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*. Routledge, London, 1996, esp. pp. 39-59.

fixing readers' attention on the insult of asymmetry: "Relations between the US and Poland are asymmetrical. This asymmetry is most reflected in [...] the case of visas."<sup>141</sup> The visa issue has a significant negative potential for US image in Polish public discourse. In general, the asymmetry perceived in relations between Poland and the US is a potential source of negative attitudes to the US.

The symbolic dimension of this asymmetry is perhaps even more capable than its material aspects of creating an anti-American ferment, as demonstrated by the scandal that arose from the leak from the meeting between the prime minister's secretary and the deputy US ambassador. Allegedly, the deputy ambassador criticized Deputy Prime Minister Roman Giertych (a member of the coalition government from the right-wing LPR) for his public speeches against the war in Iraq, and suggested that if such speeches had been given by a minister in any Western European country, that minister would have been dismissed. A day later, the liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza*, which had been attacking Giertych continuously on all fronts before the incident, published an article entitled *Hands off Giertych!*:

"I don't particularly like Deputy Prime Minister Giertych. I also differ from him and from the Polish Families' League in their assessment of the participation of our troops in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. I think that Giertych uses this issue to play political games. It's bad that the government of Poland does not speak in one voice on a matter of such importance for the state. But diplomats from foreign countries, even those most friendly to us, cannot draw the lines of public debate in Poland. The suggestion of the US deputy ambassador that the deputy prime minister should be dismissed for calling for debate on the mission in Iraq and Afghanistan is a

great scandal, and represents behavior far beyond the boundary of diplomatic practice. I enthusiastically support the idea of a debate on our engagement in overseas military missions. I am willing to confront the deputy prime minister in such a debate. But neither the Americans nor any other state should interfere in how we conduct this debate."<sup>142</sup>

## II.4. American culture

Last but not least, American culture is a significant point of reference, although it rarely penetrates the core of public discourse, which is centered on politics. The ubiquity of American culture – films, music, fast food, fashion – encourages the symbolic elites to include it in their reflections on the US which, in turn, shapes the image of the country among the wider public.

Joseph Nye suggested that America's exceptional position in the world relies not only on the "hard power" conferred by military and economic leadership, but also on "soft power", i.e. the ability of American culture to fascinate or absorb people from other nations.<sup>143</sup> This "soft" power produces two mutually exclusive attitudes. American popular culture is treated with disdain at the same time that it penetrates almost all spheres of our lives – from food to aesthetic tastes, from fashion to intellectual ideas and cultural values – and even becomes an unalienable part of our own culture. Commentator Andrzej Lubowski translated this phenomenon into the sphere of ideology and called it a split among Europeans, and especially within the European left, between Marx and Coca-Cola.<sup>144</sup>

The term "American culture" is often associated with popular culture. Several terms have been invented to grasp it, such as the "McDonald-ization" or "coca-colonization" of the world<sup>145</sup>. These con-

<sup>141</sup> ND 10.07.2007 "Visas as a Minimum Condition for Talks on Shield", interview with Mateusz Piskorski (Self-Defense).

<sup>142</sup> GW 07.11.2006 by Bartosz Węglarczyk, the leading USA correspondent of the newspaper.

<sup>143</sup> Nye, Joseph S., *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower can't Go It Alone*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002, p. 8 and following. Compare: *Europa* 05.05.2007 "Bush Hasn't Destroyed America", by Joseph Nye.

<sup>144</sup> GW 1-2.07.2006 "Imperialists from Hollywood", Andrzej Lubowski.

<sup>145</sup> The word "McDonald-ization" comes from Barber, Benjamin. *Dżihad kontra McŚwiat [Jihad vs. Macworld]*, 1995], Muza, Warszawa, 2000; it's worth mentioning that a meeting with Barber took place on October 26, 2006 in "Fabryka Trzciny", one of Warsaw Culture Centers, <http://www.fabrykatrzcin.pl/uwc/wyklad1.php>; the word coca-colonization appears in European press, e.g. *CafeBabel* 25.10.2004 "Coca-colonization of European Culture" on <http://www.cafebabel.com/en/article.asp?T=A&Id=960>, accessed 12.05.2007. Compare: GW 1-2.07.2006 "Imperialists from Hollywood", by Andrzej Lubowski.

cepts point out the negative influence of American culture, comparing it to a contagious disease that we ought to protect ourselves from. In some Western Europe countries, as well as in Russia, protectionist policies attempt to preserve the purity of native languages and cultures from US influences. In Poland, however, no alarmist public debate on the influence of American culture on Polish culture has occurred in the mainstream media.

In Polish public discourse, events that resonate in the public discussion about American culture include mostly Hollywood films in Polish cinemas, film festivals and Oscar nominations and awards. This is perhaps not surprising given the “image” nature of contemporary culture (people watch rather than read). What is more, US films constitute over half of the premieres in European cinemas, despite efforts by the European Union to promote European cinema<sup>146</sup>. The Oscar nominations and awards ceremony are treated skeptically by Polish journalists as boring and unlikely to reward films with artistic merit:

“The Oscars are part of the huge film machine created for the needs of American show-business. The nominations result from many factors, not just the artistic value of the film”.<sup>147</sup>

Even less flattering opinions are bestowed on Hollywood films that are cheap mass products with no value.<sup>148</sup> Their shameless profit orientation is noted, but the general tone of Polish commentary on American films is only moderately critical, and is sometimes even positive<sup>149</sup>. There are also odd cases when a film is criticized both for obeying the worst Hollywood traditions in artistic terms, as well as for

being anti-American, as was the case of reviews of the British film *The Road to Guantanamo* from 2006.<sup>150</sup> Journalists tend to try to find the brighter side of Hollywood. One reviewer stated:

“Hollywood continues to produce artistically outstanding films for sophisticated audiences [...]. The softening of the traditional Hollywood xenophobia and narcissism is the result of the drama of the war in Iraq, which is painfully felt by American intellectuals.”<sup>151</sup>

Another commentator remarked that the fact that Hollywood producers create anti-heroic films, such as the recent Clint Eastwood film *Letters from Iwo Jima*, is proof that the war in Iraq created a huge complex.<sup>152</sup> Interestingly, there are many examples of articles which begin by criticizing American films but end up praising American culture:

“American show business and American culture itself are pervaded by the myth of careers or heroes that go “from rags to riches”, something that is echoed in many film scripts, from *Superman* to *Forest Gump*. The theme of a person who – thanks to his skills, determination, and strong will – ceases to be an ordinary bread-eater and becomes the master of his own fate recurs incredibly often in American culture. [...] We should emphasize that the cult of the individual and that individual’s causative power, which has an almost unlimited potential, starts very early, at the level of comics and children’s films. [...] The conclusion that such stories encourage is clear and often takes the form of a line from the soundtrack, where it’s enough to “just believe”, or where “I believe I can fly, I believe I can touch the sky”, etc. Banal? Probably. But it’s good just the same!

<sup>146</sup> The MEDIA program (Measures to Encourage the Development of an Audiovisual Industry) was launched by the European Commission in 1991 and had a budget of 100 million euros for the years 2001-2006. Several well-known films were co-financed within this project, such as *Amelie*, *Run Lola Run* and *The Queen*.

<sup>147</sup> *Polityka* 07.02.2007 “I Protect my Brains”, interview with film director Sławomir Fabicki. Compare: *Polityka* 26.02.2007 “Tough Luck in Los Angeles”, by Zdzisław Pietrasik: apart from the author’s own skeptical opinion, readers called the event “cheap” and “disgraceful” in the Internet comments on this article;

<sup>148</sup> *Le Monde Diplomatique Polska* August 2006 “Feingenbaum: Hollywood in the Era of Globalization”: “More refined scripts with higher literary ambitions do not find producers. [...] Hollywood ... [is] the most showy example of the tendency towards uniformity ... in audiovisual production”; Compare: GW 19.05.2006 “Zbig: or Classic Democratic Politics”, by Adam Michnik: “It reminds one of a bad American movie ... it has a happy end”.

<sup>149</sup> GW 14-15.08.2006 “Stone on WTC Tragedy”, Zbigniew Basara.

<sup>150</sup> GW 3-4.02.2007 “Nobility is Blind”, Jacek Szczerba.

<sup>151</sup> GW 03.01.2007 “The Opening of America”, Zbigniew Basara.

<sup>152</sup> GW 08.03.2007 “Sold Heroes”, T. Sobolewski.



No matter how difficult getting through life can be, values that are repeated or instilled in such a manner become immensely important from the point of view of civil society. Individuals who believe in their own strengths and who become conscious of their own value form the basis for an effectively functioning democracy.<sup>153</sup>

A similarly complex attitude is apparent in discussions of the American media<sup>154</sup>. For instance, American TV (Fox News in particular) was criticized in the liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza* for nurturing fears of terrorism in Americans and for generally presenting a one-dimensional world.<sup>155</sup> However, a GW commentator also admitted that the American media have become more critical of the ruling elites in the last year.<sup>156</sup>

American books inspire much less interest than films, although in the last two years, several were translated into Polish and initiated some press debates. This refers particularly to non-fiction books, such as by Francis Fukuyama, Noam Chomsky and Jeremy Rifkin<sup>157</sup>. The anti-American views articulated in some of these books, most prominently by Chomsky, represent the intellectual import of anti-American ideas into Poland.<sup>158</sup> It appears that these views interest the public because they differ radically from mainstream attitudes to the US. For the same reason, the term “anti-Americanism” ap-

pears in press debates three times more often than the term “pro-Americanism”.<sup>159</sup> The former is simply more ‘alien’ and new to the Polish public, and therefore has a higher news value. In reviews and interviews, Polish journalists usually distance themselves from explicit anti-Americanism. Wishing bad luck on America is very unusual for Polish public discourse.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The mainstream press is undoubtedly anti-anti-American, and addresses anti-American arguments in order to demystify them. On the basis of the catalogue of issues presented in this essay, we can claim that the mainstream media discourse is pro-American regarding democratic institutions, democratic politics, values and, to some extent, culture. It is less pro-American regarding the military and foreign policies of the US. The war in Iraq has been a daunting experience for Poland, because it is perceived as a wrongful war with Poland in the role of perpetrator rather than martyr; the US is held partly responsible for this. However, the national political elites are seen as even more “guilty” than the Americans. In a number of debates, dissatisfaction with the war in Iraq was expressed through criticism of the bad policies of the national ruling elites rather than as a straightforward critique of American policies. However, in the longer run, the

<sup>153</sup> Internet version of *Odra* “Supper with Tele-Cheesecake” by Tomasz Kozłowski, on <http://odra.okis.pl/article.php/553>, accessed 29.07.2007.

<sup>154</sup> Compare reference [96]: the freedom of speech and the trust journalists enjoy in American society are praised.

<sup>155</sup> GW 3-4.09.2005 “TV in Times of War”, Andrzej Lubowski: “After September 11, Fox TV, with its rhetoric of rage, became a mainstay of clarity and certainly for millions of frightened Americans.” GW 14.07.2007 “Tele-Jihad of Bill O’Reilly”, Artur Domosławski.

<sup>156</sup> GW 10.05.2007 “Wolves Dressed as Reporters”, Andrzej Lubowski

<sup>157</sup> Fukuyama, Francis. *Ameryka na rozdrożu. Demokracja, władza i dziedzictwo neokonserwatywnu* [*America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power and the Neoconservative Legacy*], Rebis, Warszawa, 2006; Rifkin, Jeremy, *Europejskie marzenie. Jak Europejskie wizje przyszłości zaćmiewają American Dream* [*The European Dream: How Europe’s Vision of the Future Is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream*, 2004], Nadir, Warszawa-Poznań, 2005; Chomsky, Noam, *Hegemonia albo przetrwanie. Amerykańskie dążenie do globalnej dominacji* [*Hegemony or Survival: America’s Quest for Global Dominance*, 2003], Studio Emka, Warszawa, 2005; Friedman, Thomas L., *Świat jest płaski* [*The World is Flat*], Rebis, Poznań, 2006. Reviews, discussions and interviews with the authors appeared for instance in: *Europa* 04.05.2006 “The Demise of the Hegemon”, interview with Chomsky; GW 18.11.2005 “Don’t Let Americans Smooth-Talk You”, interview with Rifkin; *Europa* 14.06.2006 “I Can No Longer Support Neo-Conservatism”; Rz 18.11.2006, interviews with Fukuyama; GW 12.12.2006 “The Enthusiasm of a Pioneer in a Red Rug”, review of Friedman’s book by A. Domosławski: “In the Enthusiasm of a Pioneer in a Red Rug, the Optimism of a Naive Child Irritates”.

<sup>158</sup> *Europa* 02.06.2007 “Iran and Europe are the Enemies of America”, interview with Noam Chomsky: the US is compared to Hitler’s Germany; compare: *Europa* 14.04.2007 “The Left Would Revive if America Falls”, interview with Tariq Asis, editor of the *New Left Review*.

<sup>159</sup> In the period from 01.09.2005 to 31.07.2007 there were 155 mentions of the word “anti-Americanism” or “anti-American” in Rz, and 170 in GW; in the same period there were 54 mentions of the word “pro-Americanism” or “pro-American” in Rz and 51 in GW.



war in Iraq has significant potential to shape a more reserved attitude towards the US in Polish public discourse.

Domestic political developments in the US are another reason for more critical Polish views of the country, especially among left-wing (from ultra-left and post-communist to center-left) newspapers. It is common to ascribe rather liberal views to the media, but at the moment the press market in Poland is balanced and also represents more conservative, right-wing views. The critical attitude of the left-wing media to American politics is strengthened by the distribution of power in the national political arena, where the right-wing Law and Justice has been dominant in the government coalition. The American Republican president and the Polish right-wing government and president are perceived as political allies, to the detriment of the image of the US. In other words, the claims of PiS politicians to be adopting US models, for example, give their political opponents grounds not only to criticize them but also to foster a negative image of the US by association. When the ruling party claims a “special relationship” with the Americans as represented by Republican politicians, and supports American policies e.g. in Iraq, it gives the left-leaning Polish political and intellectual elites yet another reason to criticize current American policies in order to emphasize their opposition to the Polish ruling party and its conservative ideology. The association of the US with the Republican Party is a concept that the ruling elites have tried to foist onto public discourse. One side-effect of these efforts has been a more critical attitude towards both the Republicans and the US as such. Yet it should be emphasized that center-left media such as *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Polityka* are not anti-American. The former could even be called openly pro-American, and the latter “intelligently anti-American”, according to Jeffrey Goldfarb’s terminology. Democratic America is re-claimed in these media and attention is paid to the ideological diversity and celebrated democratic traditions of the country. Paradoxically, most anti-American arguments made on political grounds appear in the far-right media, which oppose neo-conservatives and ascribe current American politics to their ill influence.

While the political and symbolic elites of the new left are more likely to adopt or export anti-American arguments from their Western counterparts (the

Iraq war is described as “imperialist” or “just about oil”, etc.), their protests against the war do not automatically imply hostility to the US as such. At the moment, only the far-right media and politicians use openly anti-American arguments when discussing the war in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as the Missile Defense issue. Their arguments rest on a unique conspiracy theory of the excessive influence of corporations on American politics and the resulting demise of the role of the sovereign nation state in international politics. Usually these views are accompanied by hidden or open anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism. The characteristic feature of Polish public debates about the US and its role in the contemporary world is that anti-American discourse is a product of the far right, whereas in Western Europe it is the left. It has to be mentioned, however, that these arguments have limited influence on the national public discourse due to the relatively small share that the far-right press enjoy in the Polish press market, as well as the insignificant role of the ultra-right political parties in the Polish political arena.

The symmetry or asymmetry in relations between Poland and the US is yet another way in which the image of the US in Polish public discourse can be transformed. The US is perceived as a key global player in terms of the economy and politics as well as culture. Poland aspires to an equal partnership with the US and generally views it as beneficial, yet the very definition of this ‘equality’ is a matter of public debate. Definitions vary from more pragmatic ones based on the premise of reciprocity to those based on notions of loyalty and mutual trust. It seems that in this sphere, the polarization of Poland’s political scene is partly responsible for exaggerating Poland’s inequality or its poor definition. However, insufficient sensitivity by the US to Poland’s geopolitical position and history as well as the symbolic significance of the sovereignty issue could transform Poland’s rather strong pro-Americanism into a more cautious variety in the years to come. While the equality of the Polish-American partnership is highly valued, everything that questions this equality is immediately scrutinized in Polish public discourse. The visa issue is a prime example, because while some experts disregard the matter as largely symbolic, it arouses strong resentment in press debates and leads people to question the long-established image of the US as an equal partner.

In Polish press debates on the US, the security dimension has acquired particular importance in the last two years. The strong identification of the US with security issues is a potential challenge for Polish pro-Americanism. If the US continues with its active interventionist politics in the international arena, Poland will be obliged to constantly form an attitude to these actions and to take political steps based on them. What is more, these decisions and actions will not be arbitrary but will be influenced by a complex interplay of relations with both American and EU partners. In other words, closer relations and more active political involvement will cause tensions and disillusionment with a partner that was previously seen as benevolent but distant.<sup>160</sup>

In addition, close relations with the US involve the sphere of security, where at the moment the situation is unclear and full of anxiety and threats. At the same time, Poland is integrated with European Union structures, and relations between the EU and Poland are perceived through the lens of an economic co-operation that for the time being is rather beneficial for Poland. Thus, the promise of wellbeing with the EU wins over the promise of international security for Poland with the US because it is more tangible and immediate. This does not mean that Poland is becoming enthusiastically pro-EU or clearly anti-American, rather that a new, more cautious and thoughtful form of pro-Americanism is emerging.

## ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT:

### Press:

**Dz** – *Dziennik*, a daily right-wing quality newspaper with a weekly supplement called *Europa*; average daily circulation – 409,000 issues; average daily sales – 217,000 issues.<sup>161</sup>

**GW** – *Gazeta Wyborcza*, a daily left-wing quality newspaper; average daily circulation – 587,000 issues; average daily sales – 428,000 issues.

**ND** – *Nasz Dziennik*, a daily far-right newspaper; daily circulation – 150,000 issues.

**Rz** – *Rzeczpospolita*, a daily right-wing quality newspaper; average daily circulation – 234,000 issues; average daily sales – 150,000 issues.

**T** – *Trybuna*, a daily post-Communist left-wing newspaper; average daily circulation – 79,000 issues; average daily sales – 19,000 issues.

*Krytyka Polityczna*, a quarterly new-left opinion magazine; average circulation – 5,000 issues.

*Polityka* – a weekly center-left opinion magazine; average weekly circulation – 269,000 issues; average weekly sales – 165,000 issues.

The date of publication is marked in the manner DD.MM.YYYY after the newspaper abbreviation or name; the titles of articles are given in quotation marks; whenever subtitles were also quoted it is specifically indicated. Quotations from articles are given after the colon.

## POLITICAL PARTIES:

**LPR** – Liga Polskich Rodzin (League of Polish Families)

**PD** – Partia Demokratyczna (Democratic Party),

**PiS** – Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Justice)

**PO** – Platforma Obywatelska (Citizens' Platform)

**PSL** – Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (Polish Peasants' Party)

**SdPI** – Socialdemokracja Rzeczypospolitej (Polish Social Democratic Party)

**SLD** – Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej (Democratic Left Alliance)

**UP** – Unia Pracy (Labor Union)

**UW** – [formerly] Unia Wolności (Freedom Union)

<sup>160</sup> Similarly, attitudes toward Europe and the European Community were extremely positive until accession negotiations started in 1998. Then public support for the European Commission dropped sharply. In my opinion, this disillusionment was the result of a change in the nature of relations from “nostalgic longing” to “actual political interdependence”. A similar process might be at work in the sharp drop in support for the US in Poland in 2007.

<sup>161</sup> The average circulation and sales were calculated on the basis of Związek Kontroli Dystrybucji Prasy (Association of Press Distribution Control, ZKDP) data for 2006 available at [www.teleskop.ogr.pl](http://www.teleskop.ogr.pl) for all titles apart from *Nasz Dziennik* and *Krytyka Polityczna*, which are not monitored by the Association. Circulation figures for these two titles were supplied by them.

## *Institutions Focused on US-Polish Relations and Cooperation*

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### INTRODUCTION

People-to-people contacts across the Atlantic have come a long way in the case of Poland. At the time of Martial Law in the early 1980s, both the Reagan administration and the American media as well as civil society took concrete measures to express their support for the Solidarity cause and to strengthen traditionally strong ties going back to Kościuszko and Pulaski and the period of mass emigration from Poland to the US at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1990s, however, with the transition to democracy underway, the scale and methods of this ‘cultural diplomacy’ changed. After freedom of information was ensured in Poland with the establishment of an independent media, the Polish section of the Voice of America (VOA) was downsized. By 2001 the length of daily broadcasting was reduced to 15 minutes (from its height of 6 hours in the 1980s), and in February 2004 it was phased out completely.

The VOA case is typical of American support for Poland. Three milestones mark a gradual shift during which the US came to reassess Poland, a process in which the latter, once a beneficiary of humanitarian, democratic and economic aid, came to be seen as a regional ally and partner. The first was the transition of 1989, which ushered in a multi-party democracy and free-market economy, paving the way for American advisors, entrepreneurs and Peace Corps volunteers to come to Poland thanks to the openness of the new regime (exemplified by the unilateral visa waiver). The second milestone was Poland’s accession to NATO in 1999, which meant that the two countries for the first time in history became part of the same security architecture, giving state-to-state relations a chance to finally catch up with the excellent ties the countries enjoyed on the societal level. Finally, Poland’s entry into the EU in 2004 signaled the ulti-

mate change in its status from a country in transition, which needed American finance and expertise, to a member of the largest economic bloc on the planet.

More than any other Central European country, Poland has looked up to the United States as a model economy and its only reliable ally. These popular images are reinforced by the personal ties that many families have thanks to the Polish diaspora, the largest of any country in the region. These two factors must be kept in mind when we examine the unique form and mission of Polish-American public diplomacy.

As a result, the focus of bilateral public diplomacy has gradually shifted from the democratization of Poland itself to the identification and support of causes that the two sides consider worth pursuing. First, there has been no need either to instill or maintain a positive image of the US in Polish society – the VOA and Radio Free Europe’s Polish broadcasts were important alternative sources of information about the situation in Poland itself rather than platforms for presenting official US positions. The scaling down of various forms of direct aid during the 1990s reflected a change in circumstances in Poland, and was met with general understanding. Second, the existence of a large diaspora with its network of political, cultural and social organizations meant that efforts at building rapport and support for initiatives benefiting Poland were undertaken on both sides of the Atlantic, and in the case of NATO expansion they were even coordinated. Third, the strategic choices of successive Polish governments to strengthen military and political ties with the US (purchases of military equipment, joint missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, and plans for the deployment of the US missile defense system in Poland) have gradually expanded the list of foreign policy areas in which Polish and American



interests coincide. Finally, the consensus among the major Polish political parties on the desirability of active support for democratic movements in Belarus, Ukraine and the Caucasus and the need to contain the resurgent Russian influence in Eastern Europe are bringing American and Polish experts, policy analysts and civil activists closer together.

These special circumstances influence the choice of the actors that play a part in maintaining Polish-American people-to-people contacts and contribute to the public perception of US policies in Poland. Some have counterparts in other Visegrad states – the US embassy, business representations, scholarship programs and think-tanks. Others, however, characterize Poland in a special way, as a country with a significant and established diaspora in the US, and as a platform for US-funded projects of democratization and civil society building further to the east.

This paper looks at developments since 1989 and the current activities of the key actors shaping societal ties between the US and Poland. First, the US Embassy's cultural and educational programs are presented, illustrating the US government's priorities in bilateral relations. Scholarships and grant schemes follow, most of which are disbursed by the US government, while alumni programs are carried out in close collaboration with the US Embassy. The next two sections concentrate on America's economic presence in Poland and the transfer of skills and expertise in the third sector that first took place in Poland and recently has occurred in Poland's eastern neighbors. Finally, the last two parts examine advocacy and research work on US foreign policy and Polish-American cooperation in the security field (exemplified by NATO expansion and military collaboration).

## 1. US EMBASSY PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

The United States Embassy remains the main institution for representing US interests in Poland, and for delivering US cultural and educational

programs. While its current role has diminished as private and civic initiatives come to the forefront, the Embassy and the ambassador personally host and facilitate programs run by Americans resident in Poland and Polish beneficiaries of US assistance. The next two sections, on scholarships and grant-making and on business and interest representation, demonstrate the importance of the Embassy as a launching pad for such initiatives and as a resource for joint civic and business projects.

In the early 1990s, the Embassy played a pivotal role as an information and support center for the budding US investor community. It was no coincidence that the American Chamber of Commerce in Poland was launched at the initiative of the Embassy (see Section 4). One of the Embassy's more recent initiatives is setting up a network for former participants in American educational programs. In May 2007, the US Embassy in Warsaw announced the formation of an association for the Polish alumni of several US-funded programs (including, apart from Fulbright, the Ron Brown and Hubert Humphrey Fellowship Programs, funded by the Embassy, as well as the Polish recipients of various international schemes).<sup>1</sup> Over 300 alumni of different US-funded programs attended the opening ceremony.<sup>2</sup> The Association, whose establishment was encouraged and facilitated by the Embassy, has a mission going far beyond mere mutual support and social contacts, and aims to benefit the wider public. Its statute sets out the broad objective of "bringing Poland and the United States closer together, especially by promoting and supporting cultural, scientific, educational, social, information and economic activities." According to the document, the Association plans to organize conferences, run projects for local communities, and promote cooperation between central and local authorities and NGOs.<sup>3</sup>

The US Embassy has two kinds of ongoing programs. The first consists of presentations of various aspects of American life by speakers at the Embassy and at other locations under the "America Presents"

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<sup>1</sup> [http://poland.usembassy.gov/poland/state\\_alumni.html](http://poland.usembassy.gov/poland/state_alumni.html)

<sup>2</sup> *Newsletter Stowarzyszenia Alumni*, Vol. 1 (1), Autumn 2007, p. 2. ([http://www.fulbright.org.pl/Newsletter\\_Vol\\_1.pdf](http://www.fulbright.org.pl/Newsletter_Vol_1.pdf))

<sup>3</sup> *Statute of the Alumni Association with headquarters in Warsaw*, available at the website of the US Embassy ([http://poland.usembassy.gov/poland/state\\_alumni/alumni-association-statute-english/alumni-association-statute-english.html](http://poland.usembassy.gov/poland/state_alumni/alumni-association-statute-english/alumni-association-statute-english.html))



and “Speakers Bureau” series (the former is implemented directly, while the Embassy facilitates the latter). As part of the “America Presents” program<sup>4</sup>, American scholars and experts are commissioned by the Embassy to address Polish journalists, students and International Relations and American Studies department faculty. Ten presentations were given annually in 2003 and 2004, and 20 in 2005, on a wide variety of subjects from music, literature, and science to contemporary social problems and political issues. The state of transatlantic relations was the topic of several presentations as well.<sup>5</sup>

This program is complemented by the broader “Speakers Bureau”<sup>6</sup> scheme, by which Polish organizations and institutions can invite speakers on a broad range of topics. The Embassy’s website encourages “as many people as possible to become acquainted with American culture and traditions” and to attend events featuring Americans residing in Warsaw (diplomats or teachers) and Fulbright alumni. The Embassy also facilitates the participation of American speakers and panelists at conferences and cultural events in Poland’s regions.

As part of its second initiative, the Embassy coordinates the visits of American experts to give presentations or serve as advisors.<sup>7</sup> Featured guests have included several speakers and consultants on the topic of transatlantic relations, security in the Middle East and combating international terrorism; they all came to Poland at the invitation of government agencies, think-tanks or universities and represented, *inter alia*, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Institute for Near East Policy, and the Heritage Foundation.

## 2. SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTMAKING

Exchanges of students and scholars as well as institutional ties between educational institutions across

the Atlantic were made possible to a limited extent by the controlled opening of the Communist regime in Poland in the late 1950s. The Polish Fulbright program celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2009, and has been one of the largest and most prestigious schemes allowing Polish intellectuals to experience academic freedom, the operation of American democratic institutions and social organization first-hand. Its alumni played a significant role during the transition to democracy, supplying cadres to Polish politics, civil service and academic institutions. Along with the privately-funded Kościuszko Foundation and a plethora of other generic US public and private programs, these exchanges have produced a network of professionals who currently occupy key economic and societal positions (Fulbright alumni include former Finance Minister Stanisław Kluza, former Deputy Economy Minister Wojciech Katner and the vice-president of the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly, Tadeusz Iwiński). The once-informal alumni networks of these exchange programs are being institutionalized, with the alumni associations aiming to put the skills and expertise of their members to work for the public benefit.

### *J.W. Fulbright Commission- Fulbright program*<sup>8</sup>

Fulbright programs are available to either American or Polish citizens. Americans may participate in one of four programs: grants to US university faculty and professionals (as part of the Scholar Program), scholarships for doctoral students, exchanges of high school teachers, and visits of senior professionals. In 2005-2006, 30 American students and academics came to Poland on Fulbright scholarships, 31 a year later and 28 in 2007.

The program was extended to Polish participants in 1959. About 1,000 Polish scholars have partici-

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<sup>4</sup> [http://polish.poland.usembassy.gov/poland-pl/ampresents\\_general.html](http://polish.poland.usembassy.gov/poland-pl/ampresents_general.html)

<sup>5</sup> Examples include presentations by Embassy staff (“US-Polish Relations” by Assistant Secretary C. Ries on October 2, 2003 and by Ambassador V. Ashe on December 16, 2004. External speakers on the subject included Prof. S. Szabo (“Transatlantic Relations after the US elections”, February 24, 2005), and Prof. R. Ginsberg (“United States - European Union Relations During the Second Bush Administration”, April 6, 2005). For details see the Embassy’s website ([http://polish.poland.usembassy.gov/poland-pl/ampresents\\_calendar.html](http://polish.poland.usembassy.gov/poland-pl/ampresents_calendar.html))

<sup>6</sup> <http://polish.poland.usembassy.gov/poland-pl/speakers.html>

<sup>7</sup> The full list is available at: [http://polish.poland.usembassy.gov/poland-pl/past\\_experts.html](http://polish.poland.usembassy.gov/poland-pl/past_experts.html)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.fulbright.edu.pl/>

pated in Fulbright exchanges since 1995, doing doctoral and postdoctoral work. Currently, three programs are offered to Polish citizens: the Humbert H. Humphrey stipends for business managers and officials (15 people have been selected for the current edition), the Fulbright Alumni Initiatives Awards, and the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program, which targets high school teachers.

The Fulbright Alumni Association brings together about 200 Polish graduates of the program. The Association was established in 1993 and its members meet annually. The alumni review research proposals submitted by candidates for the program, and advise new grantees (both Polish and American) on the realities of studying in the US or Poland respectively.

The Association organizes thematic conferences every year.<sup>9</sup> These events have focused on international scientific cooperation and the role of education in countries in transition. However, the Association's reunions were also opportunities for discussing broader aspects of Polish-American relations. The 2001 conference "Polish-American Cooperation in the Second Decade of Transition" featured presentations on the role that Fulbright alumni play in the Polish economy as well as on the implications of Polish market reforms for reassessing transatlantic relations. In October 2007, the Association held a conference called "American Experiences on Polish Soil", giving alumni a chance to share "how their American experiences had influenced their ideas, backgrounds and professional careers".<sup>10</sup>

### *Kościuszko Foundation*<sup>11</sup>

Established in 1925, the New York-based Kosciuszko Foundation is a private entity supporting the study and research of Americans of Polish extraction in their country of origin, and of Polish students and scholars at US institutions. Its stated mission is "promoting and strengthening understanding and friendship between the peoples of Poland and the United States through educational, scientific, and

cultural exchanges and other related programs and activities". The Foundation boasts seven chapters throughout the US and worldwide, and apart from educational and scholarship programs also funds Polish cultural events in the US (including exhibitions, publications, film festivals, and concerts). The Foundation provides funding to other institutions with similar goals.

The Kościuszko Foundation awards fellowships and grants to Polish scholars, professionals and artists for carrying out advanced research or teaching at universities or clinics in the United States. According to the Foundation's annual report, in 2006 32 Polish scholars and scientists successfully completed projects, receiving nearly \$500,000 in support from the Foundation.<sup>12</sup> Every year around a million dollars is granted to US citizens of Polish origin wishing to study or conduct research in Poland.

## 3. BUSINESS AND INTEREST REPRESENTATION

American investors were among the first to arrive in Poland, taking advantage of the *detente* of the 1970s and the limited opportunities for the creation of Polish-American companies in the late 1980s (known as *firmy polonijne*). However, the entry of large-scale American capital only became possible after the radical market reforms of 1990, which resulted in full currency convertibility and freedom for investment, and the creation of a favorable political climate. The early 1990s also saw an influx of US business consultants, advisors and professional managers who brought with them the American way of doing business, transforming management practices throughout the Polish business community.

The two institutions presented below carried the twin mission of American business in Poland once the country achieved economic and political stability in the mid-1990s. On the one hand, big business, associated in the American Chamber of Commerce, supported the anchoring of Poland in Euro-Atlan-

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<sup>9</sup> The list can be found at: <http://www.fulbright.org.pl/activ.htm>

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.fulbright.org.pl/conf\\_lodz\\_2007\\_en.htm](http://www.fulbright.org.pl/conf_lodz_2007_en.htm)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.kosciuszkofoundation.org/>

<sup>12</sup> *Does Scholarship Matter? 2006 Annual Report* ([http://www.kosciuszkofoundation.org/Newsletter/KF\\_2006\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](http://www.kosciuszkofoundation.org/Newsletter/KF_2006_Annual_Report.pdf))

tic institutions, viewing it as fundamental to the long-term credibility of the country worldwide. At the same time, American corporations found it in their best interest to support the calls of Polish entrepreneurs for reducing the costs of doing business in Poland, including high taxes, non-transparent processes and rampant corruption. On the other hand, American capital and expertise began to be available to Poland's small and medium-sized enterprises, a particularly encouraging development considering that many Polish SMEs are family businesses and form important elements of the safety net, especially in small towns and rural areas.

### *American Chamber of Commerce in Poland*<sup>13</sup>

With the relative liberalization of Polish-American relations in the early 1970s, the need arose for a body that would establish ties and provide room for dialogue. The US-Polish Economic Council was established as a US government initiative, bringing together large companies represented in the US Chamber of Commerce and the state trading organizations represented in the Polish Chamber of Foreign Trade (PIHZ). However, large-scale foreign investment was not possible in Poland until the market reforms of 1990. In June of that year, the commercial attaché at the US Embassy, Edgar Fulton, persuaded seven US companies to set up a full-fledged American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) in Poland. Since January 1991, the Chamber has been an affiliate member of the US Chamber of Commerce.

The Chamber took an active part in furthering the interests of US companies in Poland, along with the Polish and American governments. AmCham pleaded with the Polish parliament for business-friendly amendments to a draft law on foreign investment in 1991, and a year later a permanent committee was set up to identify problem areas in Polish legislation and practice. In 1995, AmCham teamed up with the American Investment Initiative, a branch of the Financial Service Volunteer Corps, to assist potential American investors in Poland. Together, the organizations used a grant from the US Agency for International Development to publish

a document called "Polish Economic Legislation: Proposed Changes and Amendments".

AmCham hosted a number of US officials over the years, including Secretary of Commerce Robert Mosbacher (1991), Vice President Al Gore (1993), and Secretary of State Warren Christopher (1994). In October 1994, AmCham Chairman Mac Racziewicz accompanied Polish President Lech Wałęsa on a trip to Buffalo to promote American business in Poland. The trip also conveyed AmCham's support for Poland's bid to enter international organizations like the WTO and NATO. In 1994, Racziewicz began an eight-year membership in the US-EU Poland Action Commission, organized by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) chaired by Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski. The 52 projects undertaken by the Commission resulted primarily in economic transformation recommendations, but also addressed Poland's pursuit of NATO and EU membership. In 1997-1998, AmCham lobbied the US Senate to vote in favor of the NATO expansion bill that would lay the foundation for Poland's membership in the alliance. In anticipation of Poland's membership in the European Union, AmCham met with officials from the Clinton administration to discuss the accession negotiations.

While supportive of Poland's progress towards the EU, AmCham was also eager to keep Polish ties to the US strong. To this end, Chairman Racziewicz accompanied Prime Minister Leszek Miller to Washington in January 2002, while President and CEO Thomas Donohue led the first US Chamber of Commerce delegation to Poland in February that year. In December 2003, the first Polish-American Business Summit was hosted by AmCham and the Polish Confederation of Private Employers, and was attended by US Secretary of Commerce Donald Evans. In another move to stimulate foreign investment, AmCham collaborated with the US Embassy on a 'success story' project, compiling profiles of American businesses operating in various sectors of the Polish economy.

The Chamber currently has about 300 members representing American companies operating in Po-

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.amcham.pl/>



land. It represents the views of its membership to the Polish and United States governments in order to improve the overall business climate in Poland and encourage additional investment. Monthly meetings are held, featuring guest speakers from the highest levels of the Polish government, the US administration, international financial institutions and leading business circles. The Chamber is composed of 10 issue-based committees (Environmental, EU Affairs, Financial Services, Health, Employee and Labor Relations, Infrastructure, Intellectual Property Protection, Pharmaceutical, Real Estate and Tax). In addition, the Chamber's members meet at special fora, including the Political Discussion Forum, the CEO Forum, and informal monthly Business Mixers.

#### *Polish-American Small Enterprise Consulting Foundation (Polsko-Amerykańska Fundacja Doradztwa dla Małych Przedsiębiorstw)*

The Polish-American Small Enterprise Consulting Foundation was established by the Polish National Economic Chamber (Krajowa Izba Gospodarcza) and the US Congress in 1992. It operates two consulting offices (Warsaw and Gdynia) where small business owners (from Poland or abroad) can receive guidance on management, finance or marketing. Special attention is given to start-ups: entrepreneurs are advised on all stages in the life of a business (from problem identification to project implementation).

A flagship project, implemented with the National Economic Chamber since 1999, has tried to improve the access of small and medium enterprises to banking. The project aims on the one hand to convince SMEs of the advantages of bank financing, and on the other to alert banks to the needs of SMEs. Those banks with products most suited to SMEs enter an annual competition, and the winning solutions are promoted. The seven annual installments of the program have attracted 15 commercial and 50 association banks with a total of 600 branches, while about 30,000 business owners were surveyed.

## **4. COOPERATION ON TRANSFERRING THE TRANSFORMATION EXPERIENCE TO OTHER STATES**

By the end of the 1990s it was clear that Poland was no longer in need of US transformation assistance, as the country was widely viewed as a leader in the transition to a market economy – it was the first post-Communist country to regain its 1989 level of real GDP. At the same time, many Polish aid recipients felt that they had developed skills and knowledge that could be transferred to countries close to Poland both geographically and culturally, such as Belarus or Ukraine. American grant-givers in turn were wary of directly funding projects in countries with unstable political systems and relatively weak civil societies. Since 1999, therefore, several Polish-American initiatives have been launched to marry US funding and the Polish experience of transition. Although operated from Poland, these schemes – the PAUCI and Polish American Freedom Foundation being the largest – are still vehicles for advancing US-style democracy and a civil society development agenda that was successfully implemented in Poland. These arrangements also ensure that US and Polish stakeholders continue to cooperate even though Poland is no longer a beneficiary country.

#### *Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation Foundation – PAUCI<sup>14</sup>*

The Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation Foundation – PAUCI – emerged in April 2005 as a successor to the Poland-America-Ukraine Cooperation Initiative, founded in 1999 as a trilateral program of technical and financial assistance. The original initiative used US funding (provided by USAID and managed by Freedom House) to “strengthen the emerging cooperative relationship between Ukraine and Poland and to take advantage of the expertise acquired and lessons learned in Poland’s successful transition to a free-market democracy”. The initiative was unique in that this American platform was explicitly designed to build ties between Poland and Ukraine, and regarded Poland’s EU accession as a successful model of post-Communist transition. Between 1999 and 2005, PAUCI funded 185 partnership grants

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.pauci.org/en/>



to 424 organizations across Ukraine and Poland, providing over \$4.3 million in total. The program also provided technical assistance, and funded the work of Polish and American consultants through its American and Polish Volunteers for International Development Programs (AVID & PVID).

The evolution of the aid formula meant that the Americans started to leave the management and implementation of projects to the Poles, and that the scope of activities could be larger both geographically and thematically. The new mission statement refers explicitly to the integration of Ukraine into the European Union and NATO as aid objectives, and the use of Polish and European experience as the instruments to achieve these goals. The new foundation is expected to “involve Ukraine in the active support of democratic processes in the region – Belarus, Moldova, Russia and other post-Soviet countries”.

### *Polish American Freedom Foundation (Polsko-Amerykańska Fundacja Wolności)<sup>15</sup>*

The Polish American Freedom Foundation was set up in 2000 as a continuation of the Polish-American Enterprise Fund, which had provided funding to Polish small and medium-sized companies. Its mission was extended to “advance democracy, civil society, economic development and equal opportunity in Poland and, ultimately, in other Central and Eastern European countries”. It aims to transfer the experience gained from Poland’s transition to other countries undergoing transformation. The Foundation commissions projects to Polish NGOs in the following areas: education, local community development, and citizens in a democratic state.

A separate area of growing importance is the sharing of Poland’s transition experience with other countries in the region. Since 2000, the Lane Kirkland Grant program has benefited 223 participants from Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. Grantees study selected topics of key importance in transformation (economy, management, public administration, law, social sciences) for two terms at

Polish universities under the supervision of a tutor. The candidates include young representatives of the media, public administration, business and politics.

Another program of note is RITA, Transition in the Region, which consists of cross-border initiatives. In this framework, study tours to Poland have been organized for academics, social activists and businesspeople to meet their counterparts. Since 2003, 686 people have taken part in the program. In addition, since 2005 around 200 Ukrainian officials have visited Poland annually to learn about the legal and institutional reforms needed for EU accession.

The transformation of PAUCI and the Polish-American Enterprise Fund is symptomatic of the paradigm shift in US thinking about democratization and systemic transformation in Eastern Europe. Whereas once American aid was needed to help Poland build its institutions and transform its economy, now a mix of US finances and Polish expertise is being applied in other countries. US agencies now trust their Polish partners sufficiently to let them run these programs targeting other countries.

## **5. LOBBYING AND EDUCATION ON EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION**

The 1991-2004 period saw efforts by Polish policy makers, experts and academics as well as the Polish-American community to advance the cause of Poland’s entry into Euro-Atlantic military and political structures. Their work consisted of direct lobbying of successive US administrations, senators and influential organizations in Washington, and of raising public awareness of the benefits of NATO accession in Poland. While the Polish government and the military played the decisive role in preparing Poland for entry into these structures, the field was prepared for them by non-governmental initiatives, both in the US and Poland.

### *Euro-Atlantic Association (Stowarzyszenie Euro-Atlantyckie)<sup>16</sup>*

The Euro-Atlantic Association was founded by some 30 Polish public figures in 1994 with the aim

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.pafw.pl/strona.php>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.sea-ngo.org/>

of facilitating Poland's entry into NATO, the EU and other Western institutions. Currently it is headed by two former Polish defense ministers, Janusz Onyszkiewicz and Bronisław Komorowski. Its mission is to help shape Poland's foreign, security and defense policies and to educate the public on Polish policies and positions in international affairs.

Recently, the Association has been less visible in the public debate. Its activities usually include conferences, discussion panels and presentations on Euro-Atlantic political and defense integration, analyses and expert reports on defense. The Association was most recently occupied with the debate on the placement of anti-ballistic missile sites in Poland.

### *Polish American Congress*<sup>17</sup>

The Polish American Congress, an umbrella organization, is a federation of over 3,000 Polish-American organizations and clubs, ranging from national fraternal benefit societies, such as the Polish National Alliance, the Polish Women's Alliance, the Polish Roman Catholic Union, Polish Falcons and others, to veteran, cultural, professional, religious and social associations, with a total membership of over one million. With 41 state divisions and chapters, the Polish American Congress is represented in 23 states. The Congress is headed by the Council of National Directors. The day-to-day work of the Congress is carried out in its standing committees: Polish Affairs, the American Agenda, Public Affairs, Cultural Affairs, Anti-Bigotry, the Education Commission, the Polish American Heritage Month Committee, the Environmental Commission and the Youth Committee.

The Washington, DC office maintains contact with the US Administration and the relevant government agencies. Through its contacts with the US Congress, it monitors and helps develop legislation on issues of interest to the Polish American community (foreign affairs, humanitarian assistance, immigration, cultural, social, human rights, etc.)

The Polish American Congress helped lobby for NATO membership for Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia on June 14, 1991 at the Polish

American Congress meeting in New York City. On October 28, 1993, the PAC meeting in Pittsburgh resolved "to urge the Government of the United States to ensure that Poland becomes a full member of NATO as soon as possible". The resolution was passed to President Clinton. On December 6, 1993, the PAC held a meeting to usher in a coalition of 14 ethnic organizations with roots in Central and Eastern Europe. The coalition issued a letter to President Clinton raising concern over the resurgence of Russia, while a PAC representation met the President in late 1995.

The Congress's effectiveness in representing the interests of Central European states was compromised by the anti-Semitic stances of its then-President Edward Moskal, and its conflict with the American Jewish Congress. This conflict nearly derailed the NATO enlargement drive, and the Polish government ended up distancing itself from the PAC. After a change in leadership following President Moskal's death in 2005, the Congress also changed a number of its positions.

Recently, the Congress has engaged in lobbying for a visa waiver for Poland and for bills increasing budget appropriations for Central Europe.

## **6. THINK-TANKS AND PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH CENTERS**

The cementing of Poland's relationship with the US through its accession to NATO opened up a whole range of issues for public discussion, such as the place that the US would play in ensuring Poland's security, and the role that Poland could play in European foreign policy vis-à-vis Washington. By 2001, several policy research centers were addressing this need, launching and deepening public debates on issues such as the government's decisions to sign long-term military equipment contracts with the US, to send troops to Iraq and Afghanistan, and to start talks on the installation of an anti-missile system. These centers include both public and independent institutions and general-

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.polancon.org/>

interest think-tanks, as well as centers specializing in foreign policy and security issues.

### Institute for Public Affairs (Instytut Spraw Publicznych)<sup>18</sup>

The Institute for Public Affairs is one of the biggest and most established public policy research institutions in Poland. It was founded in 1995 and soon took a leading role in the development, presentation and publication of analyses and recommendations on a range of government policies as Poland embarked on deep reforms in the late 1990s. In the early 2000s the Institute concentrated on gauging the level of support for EU integration among the various social groups in Poland, and came up with proposals to raise awareness on European issues as well as to improve the turnout in the referendum on EU accession.

Given its preoccupation with EU accession, the Institute only later took up the study of transatlantic relations. In 2004-2005, the Institute conducted a research project called “Polish Attitudes toward the US, their Impact on Polish Foreign Policy, and the Future of EU Reform”<sup>19</sup> as part of a broader study of the attitudes of the societies and elites of several Central European states toward the US and American foreign policy. A collection of these studies was published in Polish and English, titled *Bridges Across the Atlantic? The Attitudes of Poles, Czechs and Slovaks toward the United States*, and was launched at a conference featuring Polish and foreign speakers.

The book was an attempt to capture the essence of pro-American attitudes among the Central and East European elites, identifying their roots and predicting future trends. The publication devoted a lot of space to public opinion dynamics. The essays covered the period from Communist Poland through the post-1989 debates.

The publication was a timely one, casting light on the wider debate on the strategic choices facing Poland following its EU accession and its strong support for the US intervention in Iraq. While it was generally concluded that Poland would continue in its close cooperation with the US, signs were noted that the costs of the relationship were being reassessed, and that the Polish government was being urged to take a more assertive position. However, in their general assessment, the authors concluded that Poland and the other new EU member states were unlikely to view relations with the US and the EU as forcing them to choose between the two. Instead, it was expected that some policy areas, such as the promotion of democracy in the EU’s eastern neighborhood, would increasingly demonstrate the need for America and Europe to join forces to achieve maximum impact.

In 2007, the Institute revisited the state of the Polish-US relations in a project called “Polish Foreign Policy at the Crossroads: Towards a New Consensus or a New Competition”.<sup>20</sup> In a paper published in the wake of the parliamentary elections of 2007, Krzysztof Bobiński considered the likely implications of the change of government for Polish-American relations. Analyzing the place that transatlantic ties occupied in party programs, electoral campaigns and public opinion polls, Bobiński noted the public’s increasing disapproval of the staunchly pro-US course followed by the Law and Justice government of Jarosław Kaczyński (on issues such as the deployment of Polish troops abroad or plans to install a missile shield). This sentiment was reflected in the greater assertiveness toward Washington seen in the declarations of the then-opposition Civic Platform. However, as Bobiński pointed out, potentially contentious issues such as the withdrawal of Polish troops from Iraq did not feature significantly in the campaigns of the two major parties, and were absent from the TV debates. He concluded that consensus could be expected on relations with the US in the new political environment, although the potential for conflict remains between

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.isp.org.pl/>

<sup>19</sup> „Polskie postawy wobec Stanów Zjednoczonych, ich wpływ na polską politykę zagraniczną oraz przyszłość reform Unii Europejskiej”, funded by the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

<sup>20</sup> Supported by the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

the government of Donald Tusk and the president, Lech Kaczyński.

The Institute for Public Affairs is one of the most recognizable non-governmental institutions in Poland, and has a reputation for stimulating debates in various policy areas. However, the bulk of its international work focuses on Poland's position within the EU – it has done several extensive studies on relations between the societies and political systems of Poland and its European partners as well as its eastern neighbors. By contrast, it deals with transatlantic relations only occasionally, and often in the broader context of either EU-US ties or issues of domestic security. The Institute's strong background in public opinion research and the analysis of societal change allows it to pursue studies that go beyond state-to-state relations, and to extend its scope to social and cultural analyses.<sup>21</sup>

### Center for International Relations (Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych)<sup>22</sup>

Transatlantic ties are among the core activities of the Center for International Relations. The Center's International Security Program deals with projects on Atlanticism, analyzes German and Central European reactions to US foreign policy, and investigates the development of NATO. Since 2001, the Center has hosted several major conferences on these topics, focusing on the relationship between global security and US-European relations. The Center has often stressed the institutional dimension of transatlantic relations, paying attention to the legacy and prospects of European cooperation in that regard (CFSP/ESDP).

In June 2006, the Centre held a seminar at which prominent Polish, German and American politicians and experts reviewed the background and

future of US-Europe ties.<sup>23</sup> One of the speakers, Bronisław Komorowski, deputy speaker of the Polish parliament, stressed that Poland and the United States have traditionally shared not only values (he cited examples from over 200 years, including US support for Solidarity in the 1980s), but more recently have worked to reach common interests. He referred to NATO as “a pillar of Poland's security policy”, and reaffirmed the security guarantees contained in Article 5 of the Treaty. His position was echoed by Stanisław Koziej, Poland's undersecretary of state for defense, who said that relations with the United States were particularly important; however, he acknowledged that despite the strategic importance of this ally for Poland, concessions could not be taken for granted, and that dialog on a number of technical issues was needed.

The Center has issued several publications on the general state of Polish-American relations and monographs on such current issues as missile defense policy, the future of European foreign policy, and the reform of NATO. The Center's strong involvement in projects on transatlantic relations dates back to 2003 when out of the total of 16 analytical reports, 4 dealt with Europe-US ties directly and 3 discussed the future of NATO.<sup>24</sup> Although the topic of US foreign policy and Polish and European reactions to it was the subject of only five analyses between 2004 and 2008, the Center's experts and featured external authors addressed the implications of American elections, and tackled two major issues in the Polish debate on relations with the US: Poland's military presence in Iraq, and the planned missile shield in Poland. The Center also handled the Polish component of the Transatlantic Trends 2006 survey.

Transatlantic relations are a priority for the Center, and its events, with the participation of experts, are aimed at the general public and the media. The

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<sup>21</sup> The Institute has commissioned a number of analyses of press discourse and conducted numerous studies on images and attitudes between nations.

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.csm.org.pl/>

<sup>23</sup> *The Future of Transatlantic Relations: Polish, German and American Concepts*, held on June 29, 2006.

<sup>24</sup> No. 7/03, A. Detjen, “Current U.S. Think-Tank Trends on the Issue of the Transatlantic Relationship”; No. 8/03, M. Zaborowski, “Between Power and Weakness: Poland – A New Actor in Transatlantic Security”; No. 9/03, S. Everts, “New Ideas for a Better European Response to the New America”; No. 16/03, A. Rotfeld, “How Should Europe Respond to the New America?”



Center's position as a general foreign policy think-tank focused on EU affairs is reflected in its tendency to view relations with the EU through the prism of Europe-America ties and global affairs.<sup>25</sup>

## The Polish Institute of International Affairs (Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych)

The Polish Institute of International Affairs was re-established in 1996, and has functioned since 2000 as an analytical institution serving the public administration (especially the Foreign Ministry) and the broader public through its reports, periodicals and expert seminars.

The Institute's focus on classic international relations means that in relations with the US it has concentrated on global security. Out of over 100 conferences listed on the Institute's websites, the 12 events devoted to transatlantic relations consider the relationship in light of worldwide security challenges (e.g. the relationship to Islam), the US security doctrine, or Polish-US military cooperation (including NATO reform).<sup>26</sup> A search of the articles published in the Institute's periodical, the Polish Diplomatic Review, confirms this preoccupation. The Review did not carry any articles devoted to US policy or Poland's relations with America in its first 14 issues (2001-2003), and the first references were in the context of non-proliferation and Poland's security strategy towards NATO and the EU.<sup>27</sup> More attention was paid to relations with the US over time, as the publication carried several articles on the implications of

the war in Iraq and the debate on the installation of a missile defense system.

The influence of the Institute on public debate may have been limited by its technical nature and its preference for expert seminars. However, its close ties to the Polish Foreign Ministry (seen in the frequent presentations of ministers and other Polish diplomats at the Institute) and its official status as an internal advisory institution to the government (providing policy analyses and internal reports) suggest a degree of influence that is not available to other analytical institutions. Its close relationship with the public administration has sometimes limited its independence; the previous head of the Institute, Roman Kuźniar, lost his post in February 2007 after publicly criticizing the Polish government's unconditional support for the plans to deploy the missile defense. This criticism was considered a breach of the unofficial restrictions on the debate that were in force during the term of PM Jarosław Kaczyński.

## Institute for Strategic Studies (Instytut Studiów Strategicznych)<sup>28</sup>

The Institute for Strategic Studies was established in 1993 in Krakow. Since 1995 it has carried out a research program called "The New Shape of Euro-Atlantic Security", giving it the longest experience in this area of any Polish institution. The Institute regularly organizes expert seminars and conferences open to the public. In August 2007, it ran a public debate on the pros and cons of deploying a missile defense system, featuring among its speakers the main Polish negotiator and the US Ambassador

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<sup>25</sup> It is interesting to note that Janusz Reiter, the head of the Center from 1996 to 2003, later became Poland's ambassador in the US.

<sup>26</sup> *Prospects for the EU-US Relationship* (December 14-15, 2000), *After the Attack: Several Europes and Transatlantic Relations* (January 25-26, 2002), *EU-US Cooperation* (May 30 - June 1, 2003), *Collective Identities and Criteria for Security in Transatlantic Relations* (September 24-26, 2004), *The American System of Anti-Missile Defense - Implications for International and Polish Security* (November 3, 2005), *Polish Policy towards the United States: Challenges and Perspectives* (January 17, 2006), *Polish-American Relations: Opportunities and Challenges* (January 26, 2006), *New American Security Strategy* (March 24, 2006), *The Future of NATO* (April 20, 2006), *Colloquium on Security and Transatlantic Relations* (June 4-6, 2006) and *Europe between Islam and the United States: Current Trends and Future Options* (June 12-13, 2006), *After the Riga NATO Summit: Between Stagnation and Globalization* (November 29, 2006), *Prospects of the Polish Military Presence in Iraq* (September 27, 2007).

<sup>27</sup> R. Stemplowski, „NATO i Unia Europejska—transformacja i bezpieczeństwo“ (NATO and the EU—Transformation and Security); W. Stankiewicz, „Współczesne koncepcje bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego na tle problemu rozprzestrzeniania broni jądrowej“ (Modern Concepts of International Security Viewed Against the Problem of Nuclear Proliferation), *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, vol. 3, no. 15 (2003).

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.iss.krakow.pl/>

in Poland. In October of that year, an event was held on the topic “Europe, NATO, America: New Dimensions in the Partnership”. The conference was attended by high-ranking officials, including the Deputy Secretary General of NATO, the former foreign minister of Ukraine, the former minister of defense of Poland, and several Polish and international experts.

The Institute has so far concentrated on the security aspects of Polish-American relations. While it enjoys a high reputation for its quality expertise in the geopolitical and hard security aspects of the subject, its specialization and location in Krakow rather than Warsaw limit its impact on the broader policy debate as well as its presence in the national media.

## CONCLUSIONS

Public diplomacy has played an important role in sustaining the positive image that US culture and values traditionally enjoy in Polish society. The investment into the minds and souls of the budding Polish elite throughout the 1980s and 1990s took different forms, and has gradually been reduced in scale. However, the fruit that is visible now – the process of institutionalizing the network of Polish alumni of US universities or the entry into poli-

tics and public life of a generation of recipients of various grants – is invaluable at this new period of Polish-American relations.

Although there are strong reasons to believe that the Polish elites will remain committed to the transatlantic alliance, such as geopolitics and shared values, this commitment is under certain strains that have appeared in relations that were once nearly devoid of any conflicts of interest. The initial capital of trust and open channels of communication are crucial at a time when Poland is moving from the dependent position of a beneficiary and applicant to that of a regional player, one ready to articulate interests that may not coincide with those of the US.

However, the initiatives undertaken so far by the US Embassy, think-tanks or civil society organizations have frequently failed to resonate with the wider public. The key issues of direct interest to the public, such as the decisions to deploy troops in Iraq and Afghanistan or plans for the installation of the missile defense system, have so far been the subject of expert seminars or technical discussions. The institutions involved in these initiatives might build on the successful experience of raising public awareness of the implications of European integration for various social and professional groups, to provide accessible information on a broad spectrum of transatlantic issues.



# **TRENDS IN PUBLIC OPINION**





# *Cultural Legacies and the Role of Political Leadership in Shaping Public Attitudes toward the EU, NATO, and Transatlantic Issues*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The identification of the population with membership in the European Union and NATO and – more generally – the formation of attitudes on foreign policy issues are undoubtedly complex processes. This study aims to elucidate some of the many factors involved.

It is commonly accepted that in foreign policy, institutions, political actors, and the political elite are the key decision-makers; however, an increasingly important role is played by civil society associations and the public. Here, the new state also had deficits to be made up and bridged stemming from a lack of experience and information among the decision-makers, as well as an inadequate contextual view of international affairs. Moreover, the public debate on international issues was immature in these early years. These deficits became visible quickly after the collapse of the Communist regime, and were still present three years later in 1993, when independent Slovakia was founded. Overall, the new elites lacked the historical experience and know-how necessary for running an independent state with its own foreign policy goals and clearly articulated national interests. The process of establishing state institutions, a diplomatic apparatus, and foreign policy institutes began only after 1993. It was also around this time that various periodicals and forums began to spring up, contributing the necessary backdrop to a nationwide discussion on the country's foreign policy. At this stage, the making of foreign policy was still marked by the general lack of awareness among the public of Slovakia's geopolitical position and future challenges.

In 2004, 15 years after the collapse of the Communist regime and 12 years after its independence, Slovakia found itself at an historical landmark that

marked the accomplishment of its two main strategic goals: membership in the European Union and NATO. These goals were met, but the process of adapting to this membership and actively contributing to it are ongoing, as accession is only the first step in true integration. Needless to say, the first years of Slovakia's membership in both alliances have proved a true challenge to a majority of the public, as people were suddenly confronted with international issues that had previously been remote to them. Many complex global problems have thus become an integral part of public debate.

This paper focuses on the public's view of transatlantic cooperation, NATO, the United States, and US policies toward Slovakia. It also touches on a broad range of foreign policy, security and other related topics in the context of recent domestic political developments.

## **THE WESTERN VECTOR, THE EUROPEAN UNION AND NATO INTEGRATION**

It cannot be overseen that cultural roots play an essential role in forming public views of the country's foreign policy and integration issues. In the same vein, the sense of cultural-civilizational belonging to a certain group of countries, as well as the degree of cultural affinity to this group are important factors shaping public attitudes. When it comes to cultural affinities, Slovaks have overwhelmingly positive views of "the West". It must be noted, however, that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have not recently been forced to choose between Western Europe and the United States in transatlantic rows (e.g. over the invasion of Iraq). For most states in the region, the dilemma that has pervaded their modern discourse has been whether they be-

long to the West or to the East. The only exception, and one that essentially suspended this discourse, was the period of the Cold War, when rivalry between the great powers shut off all alternatives for those countries that found themselves on the wrong side of the Iron Curtain. The East came to be associated with imperialist Russia, as well as with pan-Slavism, Soviet domination, totalitarian regimes, and for many even military occupation. The West, on the other hand, was synonymous with democracy and prosperity. What is more, the West represented the “idea of Europe”, and stood for a cultural space that stretched across the Atlantic. For this reason, integration with the European Union and NATO was always viewed by the countries of the eastern bloc as two sides of the same coin. NATO and the European Union were seen as not merely compatible but even mutually reinforcing.

However, despite the fact that both organizations were perceived as belonging to the same ‘West’, the public’s support for membership in them followed different trajectories. Public attitudes toward integration with the EU have remained positive and stable since years prior to the actual date of accession with upwards of 70 % of the population supporting it. What is more, this support even increased after accession along with expectations of the benefits that membership would bring. The high level of public support reflected the consensus on this issue proclaimed by political parties and other opinion-makers, including elites and the media.

When we take a closer look at the underlying reasons for the high level of support for joining the EU, we can classify them into three groups, two of which concerned socio-economic factors. The public believed that EU membership would increase job opportunities and improve the economic situation (i.e. increased investments, greater availability of European funds). The third category of expectations had

to do with the free movement of people and goods, epitomized by the slogan “Europe without Borders”, which was understood to symbolize the definitive end of the Iron Curtain and the division of Europe. And indeed, in the first years of membership, all these expectations were confirmed and became reality, and support for EU membership spiked upward.

While the factors influencing the public’s support for EU accession were prevailingly socio-economic in nature, the benefits of joining NATO remained unclear for a sizable portion of the population. The most widely proclaimed benefit of membership was increased security. Other (indirect) benefits included a positive effect on direct foreign investments and on the economy, and a strengthening of democracy, although these impacts were only marginal. The lower level of support for NATO membership compared to EU membership was due partly to the fact that the public was not as convinced of its benefits. Moreover, there was general apprehension regarding the possible negative repercussions of membership, such as that Slovakia would be pulled into armed conflicts or would be forced to increase in military spending, and even that the country might lose its sovereignty. These differences in the public perception of membership in the European Union and NATO remain unchanged even years after the country’s accession to both organizations.

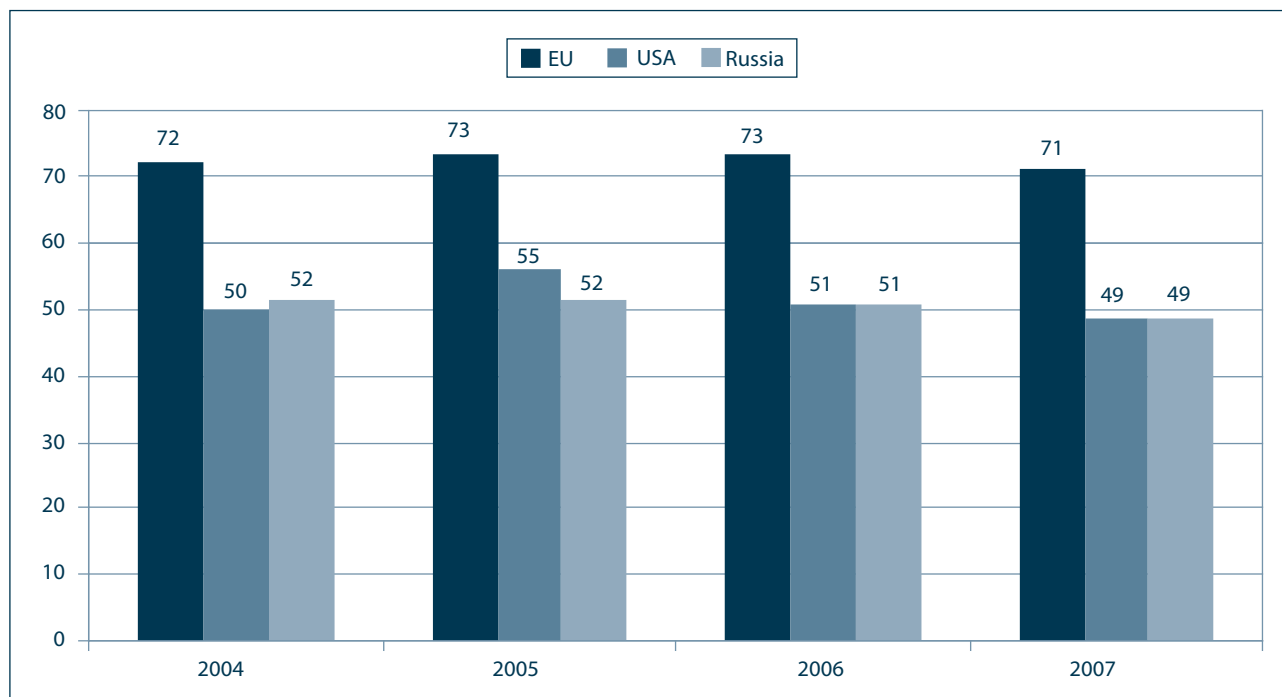
## **PERCEPTION OF THE UNITED STATES – COMPARING SLOVAKIA TO OTHER COUNTRIES**

Data provided by the “Transatlantic Trends”<sup>1</sup> international survey project offer a valuable basis for analyzing the Slovak public’s attitudes on many foreign policy, security, and transatlantic issues. Among other aims, the project set out to monitor the public’s perceptions of other countries, capturing these on a “feeling thermometer”. As can be seen in Graph

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<sup>1</sup> The Transatlantic Trends survey is a project of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) and the Compagnia di San Paolo, with additional support from the Luso-American Foundation and Fundacion BBVA. The project started in 2002 and annually includes the United States, nine EU member states (Great Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Turkey, and since 2006 Bulgaria and Romania). Collection of data and field coordination was conducted by the EOS Gallup Europe agency network; in Slovakia it was TNS Slovakia. The interviews were conducted between June 6 and June 24, 2004. In all countries, random samples of approximately 1,000 men and women, 18 years of age and older, were interviewed. In Slovakia (as in Poland and Turkey) the survey was done through face-to-face interviews, while in other countries CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews) was used.

**Graph 1: Slovakia – developments in public views of the United States, Russia and the EU<sup>2</sup>, 2004-2007**

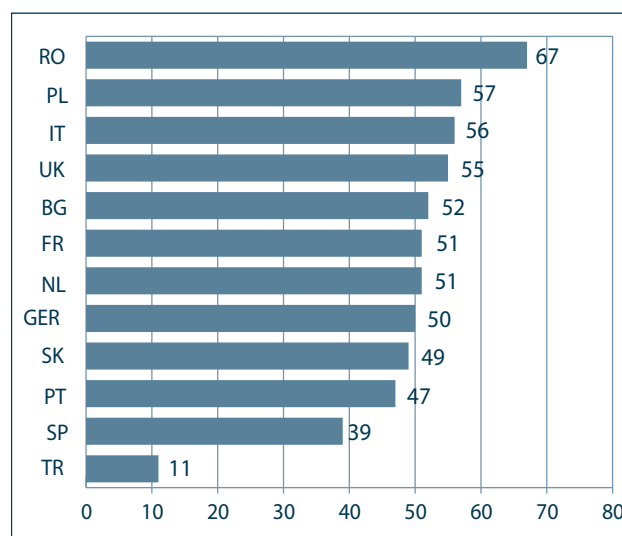


Source: *Transatlantic Trends 2004 – 2007*.

1, people's feelings toward the United States as a country are only lukewarm, but a steady trend emerges from the data collected annually over the longer term. Between 2004 and 2007 we did not register any significant changes in views of the country as such. However, in terms of public views of America's standing in the world and its foreign policy, there were significant shifts. A comparison of the public's views of the United States and the European Union reveals that they are far more positive and stronger toward the European Union. Strikingly, the United States is regarded nearly as unfavorably as Russia. As we will see, public apprehension regarding Russia and its policies is relatively weak in Slovakia.

When we compare the Slovak public's attitudes toward the United States with those in other countries included in the survey, Slovakia is close to the European lukewarm average. More positive feelings toward the US were registered in Romania (67 degrees on a 100-point scale), followed by Poland

**Graph 2: Comparison of other countries and their attitudes toward the U.S. (on a scale from 0 to 100)**



Source: *Transatlantic Trends 2007*.

(57 degrees, which despite a drop is still over the EU average<sup>3</sup>). Compared with the tepid 49 degrees

<sup>2</sup> Wording of the question: „Next I'd like you to rate your feelings toward some countries, institutions and people, with 100 meaning a very warm, favourable feeling, 0 meaning a very cold, unfavourable feeling, and 50 meaning not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from 0 to 100. If you have no opinion or have never heard of that country or institution, please say so“.

<sup>3</sup> For more, see the study by Bútorá and Gyárfášová in this publication.



in Slovakia and 52 degrees in Bulgaria (and also taking into account other indicators), Romanians and Poles remain the strongest 'Atlanticists'.

The attributes of the image of the US and Western Europe among Slovaks are better understood with reference to a research report by the IVO think-tank in Bratislava carried out in June 2002<sup>4</sup>, when they were examined through a series of open-ended questions eliciting spontaneous answers and associations. We discovered that the public makes a clear distinction: 'Western Europe' elicits mostly positive associations clustered around two categories – *economic development* (high standard of living, low unemployment, social security, prosperity, wealth, welfare protection, trade, satisfaction, jobs, good pay, etc.) and *democracy* – freedom, tolerance, independence, progress, respect for human rights, etc.). The United States is naturally also viewed as an economically developed country, but its image is harmed by negative associations such as superiority, dominance and arrogance.

Even though the research data was obtained some time ago, more recent findings corroborate the results and allow us to say that there have been no major shifts in public perceptions: Differences remain in popular perceptions of the EU and NATO.

## THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE WORLD – LEADERSHIP WITH A QUESTION MARK?

The challenge of identifying the factors that shape the transatlantic identity, loyalties to the transatlantic partnership, or even public attitudes to cooperation, faces a significant methodological test – how does one measure them? How exactly does a researcher arrive at the true indicators shaping these phenomena? The Transatlantic Trends research, aside from employing methods such as a 'feeling thermometer', uses scientific variables to capture trends, such as the desirability of a strong leadership role for the US in world affairs, approval or disapproval of the performance of the US president, and the level of

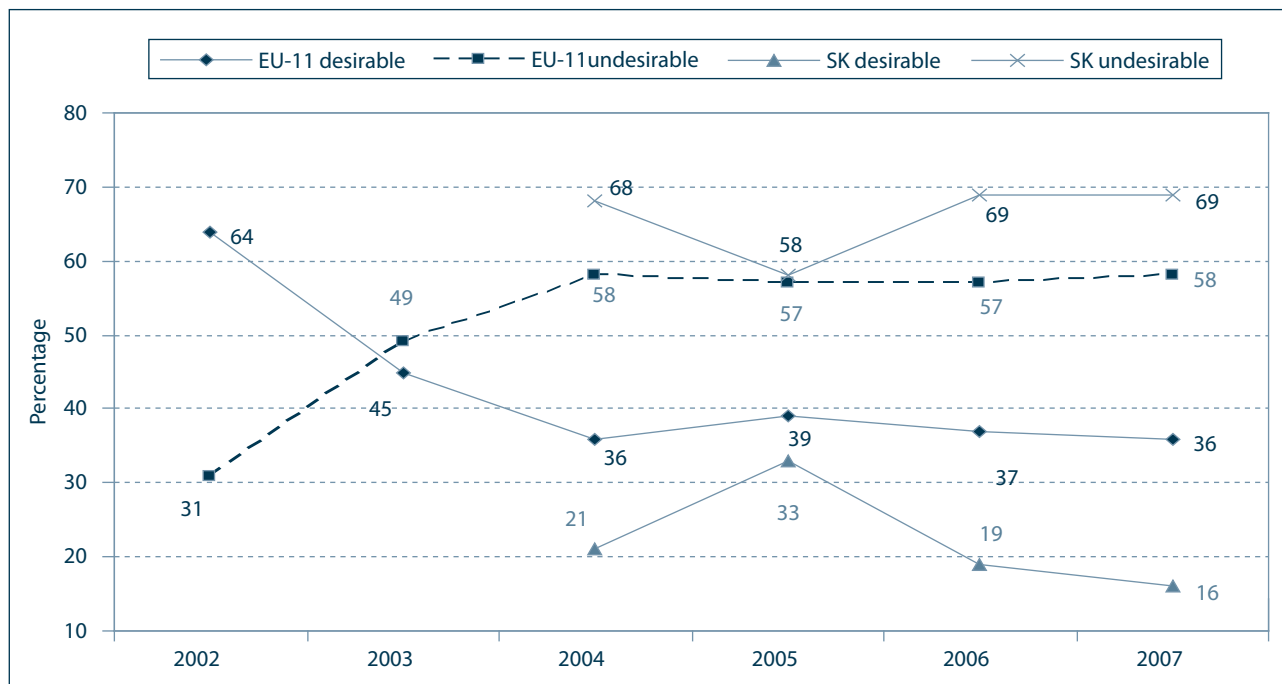
belief that NATO is important to the security of the country. In Slovakia's case, from 2004-2007 we saw an interesting development that is worth discussing in greater detail. In 2004, (the first year of Slovakia's inclusion into the survey) the share of respondents who supported Atlanticism was relatively low; the following year we saw an increase in pro-American and Atlanticist attitudes, followed by a sharp decline in 2006. This downward trend continued through 2007 - in June 2007, only 16% of the Slovak population deemed America's leading role in global affairs as desirable, a sharp drop from 19% in 2006 and 33% in 2005 (Graph 3). A similar downward trend was seen in views of the performance of the US president, as well as the role of NATO in providing security for Slovakia (Graph 4). While the positive results seen in the 2005 survey can in part be attributed to the official visit of President Bush to Slovakia in February 2005, or a feeling of 'post-integration euphoria', it was not repeated thereafter. This decline was probably due to the pre-election campaign rhetoric of the then-opposition Smer party, which sharply criticized US policy in Iraq as well as the overtly pro-American policies of the country's unpopular government, led by Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda (1998-2006). Smer also called for Slovak troops stationed in Iraq to be pulled out. Thus, the continuing decline in the Atlanticist attitudes of the Slovak population also seems to be a direct result of the weakening transatlantic vector in Slovak foreign policy, as well as other changes that took place on the domestic political scene following parliamentary elections in 2006 (we will re-visit this issue below).

Similarly, the attitudes of the Slovak public toward NATO membership remain reserved, compared to the positive perception of the European Union. As is shown in Graph 4, less than half of the respondents see NATO as important for the security of the country; the actual figure for Slovakia is 44%, compared to an average of 55% in the nine countries of the European Union included in the study. Still, in Slovakia, those who do not see the importance of NATO are in the minority (30%), with an almost equal share of re-

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<sup>4</sup> For details see: Krivý, V. – Gyárfášová, O.: *The Slovak Public and NATO: Report from a Sociological Survey*, June 2002. NOC, Bratislava 2002; and Gyárfášová, O.: "The Perception of the United States in Central Europe – the Slovak Case", in: *Bridges Across the Atlantic? Attitudes of Poles, Czechs, and Slovaks Toward the United States* (Kolarska-Bobińska, Lena, Kucharczyk, Jacek – Kaczyński, Piotr Maciej, eds.) Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2005, pp. 177-201.

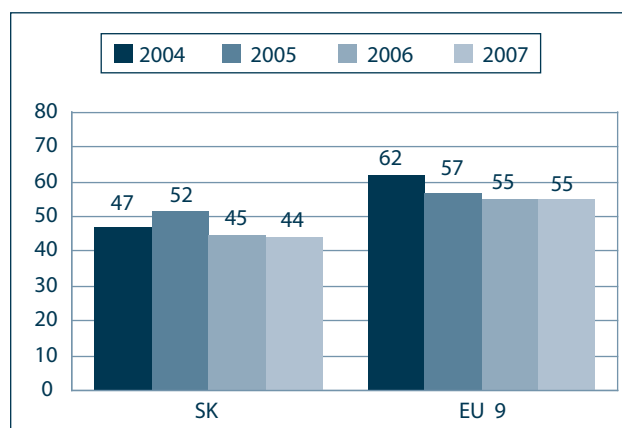
**Graph 3: Attitudes of European and Slovak publics toward America's global leadership (in %)**



Source: *Transatlantic Trends 2004 - 2007*.

spondents having no clear position on the issue (26%) (*Transatlantic Trends 2007*). In general, there is strong support for NATO membership among older members of the alliance, such as the Netherlands and Great Britain, where the share of supporters is 66% and 60%, respectively. However, the 2007 survey revealed that in the newest members – Romania and Bulgaria – the share of supporters approaches these levels (62% and 58%, respectively). Another interesting finding concerns public opinion in Poland, a NATO member since 1999, where support for the alliance is only at 46% (*Transatlantic Trends 2007*). It has to be noted, however, that the survey did not include other Central and Eastern European countries. An important trend that can be identified from the results is the decline in the relevance of NATO membership for European populations in general. Perhaps the most striking decline was in Germany, where support in 2007 fell to slightly above the average (55%) from 74% in 2005. One reason for this decline could be the overall deterioration in transatlantic relations and increasingly critical views of US policies among the public in EU-member countries.

**Graph 4: Is NATO essential for the security of your country? (% of affirmative responses in Slovakia)**

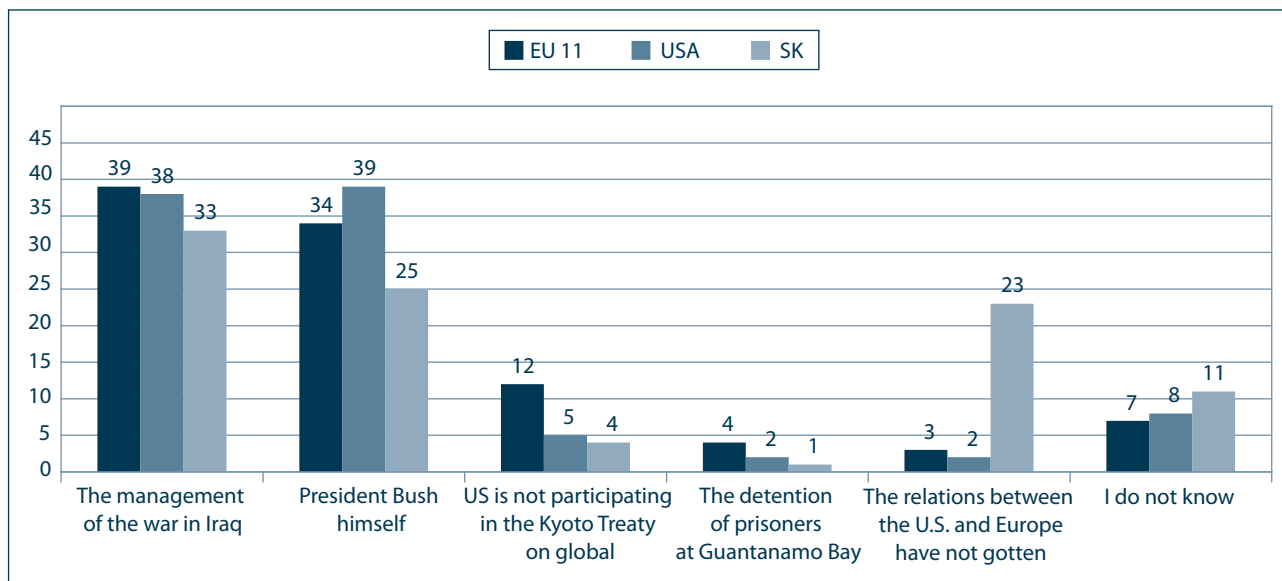


Source: *Transatlantic Trends 2004 - 2007*.

In addition to understanding the dynamics underlying these views of transatlantic issues on the domestic scene, it is helpful to look at these trends in a comparative context. A wide-ranging analysis of the Transatlantic Trends survey data in 2004<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Ronald Asmus, Philip P. Everts and Pierangelo Isernia: *Across the Atlantic and the Political Aisle: the Double Divide in U.S. – European Relations* (available at: [www.transatlantictrends.org](http://www.transatlantictrends.org)).

**Graph 5: “Some people think that relations between the United States and Europe have deteriorated lately. As far as the United States is concerned, if you could name the single most important factor that has influenced this decline, what would it be?” (in %)**



Source: *Transatlantic Trends 2007*.

ranked various European countries according to two criteria: their commitment to the Atlantic mode of security (“Atlanticists” vs. “Independents”), and their willingness to use military force. Combining these two dimensions, the authors of the study divided EU member states into four basic models: Europe *à la* Blair (relying on an alliance with the US and on military power), Europe *à la* Schröder (allied with the US but emphasizing civilian or soft power), Europe *à la* Chirac (independent of the US and capable of acting militarily), and Europe *à la* Switzerland (independent and using civilian or soft power alone in foreign policy). In Slovakia’s case, the public views expressed in June 2004 placed the country in the fourth camp, and made it arguably even less pro-force than the (tenuous) European consensus. Needless to say, this only further accentuates the distance between Slovak public attitudes and US foreign and defense policy. As we stated in 2005<sup>6</sup>, the extent of internal societal polarization is also important if the transatlantic orientation is to be sustainable. For example, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Slovakia all show deep political polarization on issues of Atlanticism. After the general elec-

tion in 2006, this factor proved critical – the wholesale change in government led to a weakening of the transatlantic orientation, at both the political elite level and among the public. Of course, this was a two-way street, as politicians were perhaps just taking advantage of the weak transatlantic ties among the public, and using the opportunity to shape and influence them. It is now up to them to show leadership and to frame the discussion on transatlantic issues in a constructive manner, without fanning emotions.

One of the aims of the research was to uncover the reasons behind the deterioration in transatlantic relations (Graph 5). The findings showed that the European public in general regards the war in Iraq and President George W. Bush (who is closely linked to the war) as the two main causes of this deterioration. Other issues on the transatlantic ‘radar’, namely conditions at the US detention site at Guantanamo and the abstention of the US from the Kyoto Protocol, are not ascribed much weight by the public in Slovakia. What is interesting about the Slovak survey, however, is that 23% of respond-

<sup>6</sup> Gyárfášová, O. - Bútorová, Z. - Velšic, M.: “Slovakia’s First Year of EU and NATO Membership from the Citizens’ Perspective”, in: *Slovakia’s Euro-Atlantic Integration – A Year After*. Working Paper, Bratislava 2005.

ents do not think there has been any deterioration in relations between the US and Europe. This runs contrary to findings in other European countries, which showed a broad consensus on just this issue. Moreover, in Slovakia, the share of those who blame the deterioration on President Bush is much lower than in the other countries included in the *Transatlantic Trends* research.

## SECURITY THREAT – RUSSIA?

The GMF survey carried out in 2007 also examined perceptions of Russia and the level of public concern with various developments in the Russian Federation. It was revealed that the Slovak public – compared to the European average – is less concerned about developments in Russia. While 59% of respondents in Poland expressed concern about backsliding on democracy, and the average in European countries was 61%, in Slovakia this concern was shared by a mere 30% of respondents. Moreover, while a majority of the population in European countries showed concern about Russia's behavior

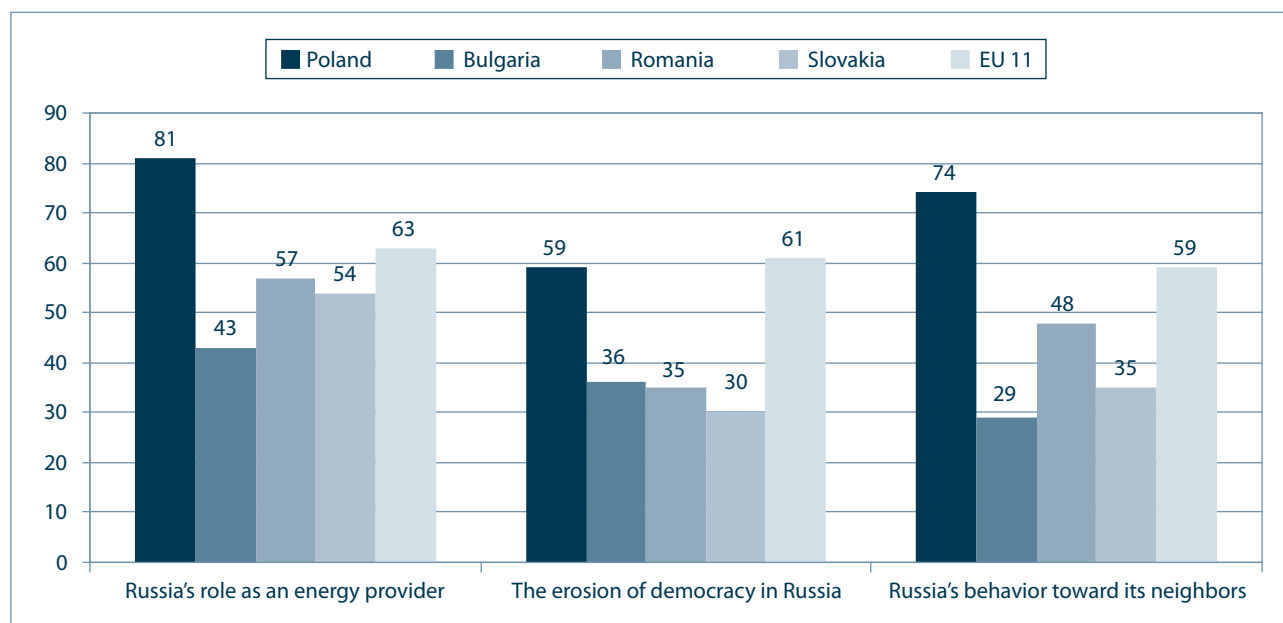
toward its neighbors (74% of Poles and 59% of Europe overall), only 35% of Slovaks shared this worry. On the other hand, the Slovak population still has some reservations when it comes to Russia – 53% of respondents were concerned about Russia's role as an energy supplier, namely its reliability in this regard. Overall, however, the Slovak population does not perceive Russia as a potential threat.

The underlying reasons for these differences may be historic. In contrast with Poland's experience of Russian expansionism, which extends back beyond the Soviet era, the Slovak public, like people in the other two CEE countries studied, Romania and Bulgaria, views Russia with "geopolitical indifference".

## CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

A number of surveys have confirmed that public views of transatlantic cooperation, the US and NATO tend to be far more dramatic, polarizing, and fluctuating than perceptions of the EU. As the

**Graf 6: Share of the population in select European countries expressing concern about developments in Russia<sup>7</sup> (in %)**



Source: *Transatlantic Trends* 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Wording of the question: „As you may know, some people are concerned about recent developments in Russia. Those who are concerned give a number of different reasons. To what extent are you concerned or not about each of the following items...”



survey results illustrate, public opinion in Slovakia is influenced by several factors. However, at the time of the country's integration, we saw that the fragile commitment to the transatlantic partnership and a sense of greater international responsibility could easily be either challenged or shored up by strong political leadership. After the 2006 elections, which brought a change in government, we saw the onset of stagnation and even regression on many transatlantic issues. There was a clear connection between this decline and the use of populist rhetoric in the debate on Slovakia's foreign policy following elections.

The changes that occurred were not tangible or easily identifiable in state policies or official government positions. Instead, they were on the level of rhetoric and appeals by top political representatives, which had an even stronger impact on public opinion. For example, the statement by Prime Minister Robert Fico that "politics, particularly international politics, is not about values but always about interests, business, and power", in effect relegated foreign policy to "a game of big interests pursued by big players." This view appeals to the inward-looking, almost isolationist mentality of Slovaks, and reinforces the widely-held attitude that "you shouldn't poke your nose into things that don't concern you."

Furthermore, the rhetoric of the current ruling coalition tends to highlight ethnicity and makes heavy use of symbolism. Political appeals of this nature tend to strengthen the ethno-centrism of the majority Slovak population, and to glorify those figures in Slovak history who were also put on a pedestal during the totalitarian wartime Slovak state from 1939–1945, namely Andrej Hlinka. At the same time, during the tenure of the Fico government thus far, we have generally seen a lower priority assigned to democracy-promotion projects. Instead, the focus has been on economic interests over value-based policies in support of democracy and respect for

human rights. All of these trends have instilled and reinforced a sense of helplessness in the public's perception of their country's role in world affairs. Moreover, such rhetoric could even undermine the fledgling awareness of Slovakia's international responsibilities and the public's belief in democratic values in the conduct of foreign policy.

In 2006, Ivan Kraštev correctly noted that while during the Cold War, foreign policy and security issues were excluded from the domain of electoral politics due to the nature of the security threat, now these issues are at the center of electoral politics, and NATO could become the victim of a populist backlash. In the case of Slovakia, the (re)emergence of populist rhetoric in foreign policy cannot be attributed entirely to a change in the nature of the security threats, but also has to be seen as a consequence of the change in government after the elections of 2006.<sup>8</sup> Based on the Transatlantic Trends survey, GMF analyst Ronald Asmus distinguishes two categories of countries<sup>9</sup>: 1) those whose publics are willing to support an activist foreign policy, are pro-US and largely pro-European, and whose leaders want to punch above their weight (Poland, Romania), and 2) countries whose publics and elite are more inward looking, minimalist and non-activist (Slovakia, Bulgaria). Moving Slovakia out of this category will not be possible without a strong commitment toward transatlantic cooperation, and its active promotion, by political leaders and other public actors.

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Gyárfášová, O. - Bútorová, Z. - Velšic, M.: "Slovakia's First Year of EU and NATO Membership from the

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<sup>8</sup> For more see: Bútora Martin, Gyárfášová Olga, Mesežnikov Grigorij, Skladony W. Thomas (eds): *Democracy and Populism in Central Europe: The Visegrad Elections and Their Aftermath*, Bratislava, Institute for Public Affairs, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Presentation of TT 07 by Ronald Asmus in Warsaw, September 26, 2007. Later on, a third group – not in the TT findings – was identified: countries whose political leaderships are activist, but where the public can still go either way (the Czech Republic and the Baltic countries).

Citizens' Perspective", in: *Slovakia's Euro-Atlantic Integration – A Year After*. Working Paper, Bratislava 2005.

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## *The End of Anti-Anti-Americanism?* *Attitudes towards the USA in Poland*

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### INTRODUCTION

Poland is America's friend and ally, one of the most consistently pro-American countries in the European Union. Polish governments have supported American policies even to the detriment of Poland's position within the EU. Moreover, there has been little or no discrepancy between these policies and public opinion. Polish people have been supportive of America both because they felt it was in their interest, and because they genuinely like the country.

But things have started to change. The title of this paper is drawn from its thesis that the positive picture of America in post-1989 Poland was due in part to a wholesale rejection of the crude anti-Americanism of the Communist era<sup>1</sup>. In the early years of post-Communist transformation, America enjoyed a kind of unrivalled support that did not leave much room for critical reflection on American society or the goals and means of US policies. Looking back, the turning point in attitudes towards the US came in 2003-2004, and can be attributed to two events that occurred within several months of each other: the launch of the Iraq war, and Poland's accession to the EU.

This paper is based on an analysis of data from surveys on views regarding the US, Americans, and US policies in Poland. We contextualize the data by comparing Poland with the rest of Europe and the world, and compare it over time to outline trends in views of the United States.

### OPINION FORMATION

There are four major sources of attitudes towards the US, each affecting a different number of people and varying in the strength and nature of its impact.

The first is **direct personal experience** gained by people who have lived in America for some period. Few people have had that direct, hands-on experience, as only 500,000 to 1 million people living in Poland have ever been to the US<sup>2</sup>. However, even though it concerns relatively few people, this source produces informed opinions about everyday reality. Information gathered personally also tends to be disseminated further, as time spent in the US is a popular topic of conversation for many who have visited the country.

A far more formidable source of views regarding the US is **indirect personal experience**. By this we mean information obtained from someone who visited the US or who lives there: people who have visited or worked in the US give their perspectives on that country, while immigrants communicate with friends and relatives back home. Polish immigrants form one of the largest national groupings in the US, and they have been a valuable source of information that would otherwise have been censored or unavailable. Krzysztof Michałek, director of the Institute of American Studies at the University of Warsaw, estimates that "[from 1918-89], on average, every third Polish person living in the country

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<sup>1</sup> Mateusz Fałkowski called this pattern of opinion formation anti-antiamericanism; „Postawy Polaków wobec Stanów Zjednoczonych, Amerykanów i stosunków transatlantyckich”, In: L. Kolarska-Bobińska, J. Kucharczyk, P.M. Kaczyński (ed.), „Mośty przez Atlantyk?”, ISP, Warszawa 2005, p.41

<sup>2</sup> According to CBOS, 2% of adults were in the US in the last 20 years; according to Transatlantic Trends, 4% of adults visited the USA in their lifetime. The proportion of West Europeans who have been to the USA is much higher.

received first-hand information from the United States”<sup>3</sup>. Information about living conditions and the possibility of improving one’s standard of living may have played a very important role in creating an image of the US as a land of opportunity. “The USA offered not only a chance to make money, but also to spend it in a way that guaranteed, on average, a higher living standard and a better quality of life than in Poland and Europe at that time,” Michałek wrote. Moreover, these opportunities were sometimes exaggerated by emigrants who did not want to admit failure.

The third source of opinion-shaping information is **experience of the impact of US policy**, especially foreign policy, which shapes the attitudes of virtually everyone interested in public affairs. During the Cold War, Communist propagandists tried to exploit this theme. For example, during the period of Martial Law in Poland in the 1980s, food shortages were attributed to US sanctions. However, efforts to tarnish America’s image by criticizing its international policies were ineffective<sup>4</sup>. Many people viewed the US even more positively than West European countries because of its tough policies towards the USSR under the anti-Communism of Ronald Reagan. The public’s wholesale rejection of the Communist regime’s shallow anti-American propaganda resulted in an image of America in the post-1989 period that was rather one-dimensional. Unlike in Western Europe, “the US did not have a negative image as an advocate of economic globalization and neo-liberalism”<sup>5</sup>. We embraced the US whole-heartedly as an ally, a trusted friend who enabled us to join NATO.

This situation only started to change when the US became our ally formally within NATO. Some began to realize that Poland was not as important for the US as we were wont to believe. The futile struggle to obtain a visa waiver status for Polish citizens, for example, directly affected many people in Poland, not just those who were refused a visa. More importantly, the war in Iraq taught many people

that involvement in US-sponsored missions had costs as well as benefits. A gap started to open up between the political elite and the public. Of course, the military might of the US is only one of many aspects of US foreign policy that people experience in Poland, and may be even less important at times than America’s economic power.

The most important source of public attitudes towards America is also probably the hardest to study. **The impact of cultural artifacts** (chiefly films and TV programs, but also pop songs, Internet content, etc.) affects the entire populace. It would be hard to find an adult Pole who has not seen an American film or watched a TV program made in the US. The ubiquity of US cultural products has created a vivid image of the country. “Film has played an important role in shaping pro-American attitudes... Viewers, especially those with poor analytical skills, treated the content of films as a record of the American reality, including what US towns and houses looked like, how homes were decorated, how people dressed, and how they behaved in private... The country and its inhabitants were familiar [to Poles].”<sup>6</sup>

The four sources outlined above are not a complete list of factors shaping opinions about the US. In recent years, international civil society has had an increasing impact, such as the anti-globalization movement. Communication among these people, the conclusions they reach and the actions they take can deeply affect individual attitudes. Another source of opinion-forming information is cultural products about the US that are made outside America. Under Communism, the US was presented in a biased way by the state propaganda machine. On the other hand, Polish pop culture pretended to be American, and essentially “Americanized” itself. Books were often set in America, and Polish authors even adopted English pseudonyms (e.g. Joe Alex).

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS AMERICANS

Mounting criticism of US foreign policy, especially in Iraq, and rising satisfaction with EU mem-

<sup>3</sup> „W Poszukiwaniu Nowej Kolchidy”, in: L. Kolarska-Bobińska et al. (ed) op.cit., p. 18

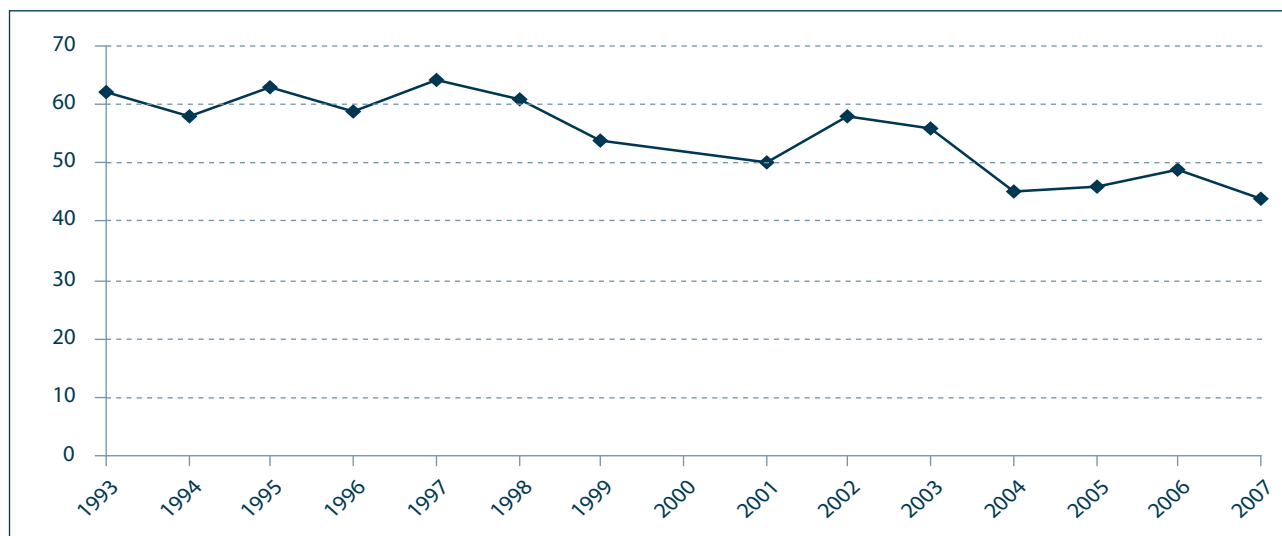
<sup>4</sup> For instance, Poles tended to justify Vietnam War, Michałek in L. Kolarska-Bobińska et al. (ed) op.cit., p. 30

<sup>5</sup> L. Kolarska-Bobińska et al. (ed) op.cit., p. 30, p.10

<sup>6</sup> Michałek In: L. Kolarska-Bobińska et al. (eds.), Op.cit. p 32



**Graph1: Attitudes towards Americans (percentage expressing sympathy)**



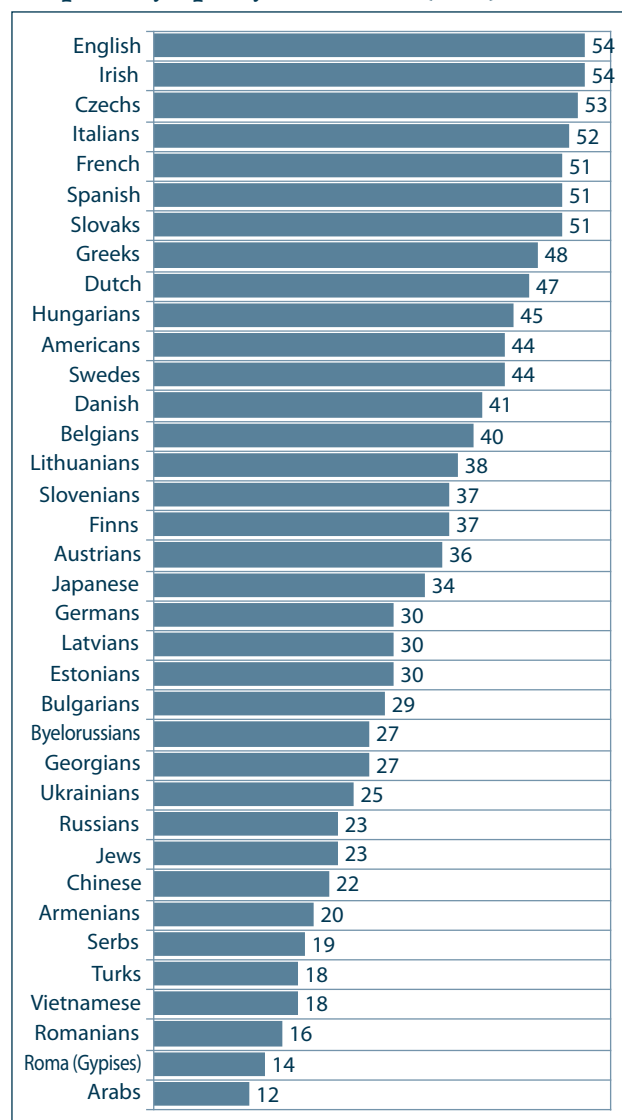
Source: CBOP.

bership have combined to darken the image of America and Americans since 2004. Attitudes to Americans are still favorable, but in recent years feelings have cooled. Research done by the CBOS (Center for Measuring Public Opinion) in recent years shows that Poles regard Americans with more sympathy than most other nations. In September 1997, for example, almost two-thirds of adult Poles (64%) said they had warm feelings for Americans, and until 2003 the ratio of people who regarded Americans positively remained over 50%. But from 2004 onwards, the war in Iraq, increasing skepticism regarding George Bush's foreign policy, and unfulfilled hopes for tangible benefits from the alliance with the US (e.g. the visa waiver) began to cool sympathy for Americans. In August 2007, 44% of Poles expressed positive feelings towards Americans, while 21% held negative views.

Although attitudes towards Americans remain positive overall, they are no longer exceptionally so. In 2007, Americans were less popular than the English, the Irish, the Czechs, Italians, the French, Spaniards, Slovaks, Greeks, the Dutch, and Hungarians<sup>7</sup>.

The data from the Transatlantic Trends study confirm these findings<sup>8</sup>. In 2007, the average declared warmth, or "temperature" of feelings towards the

**Graph 2: Sympathy for nations (in %)**

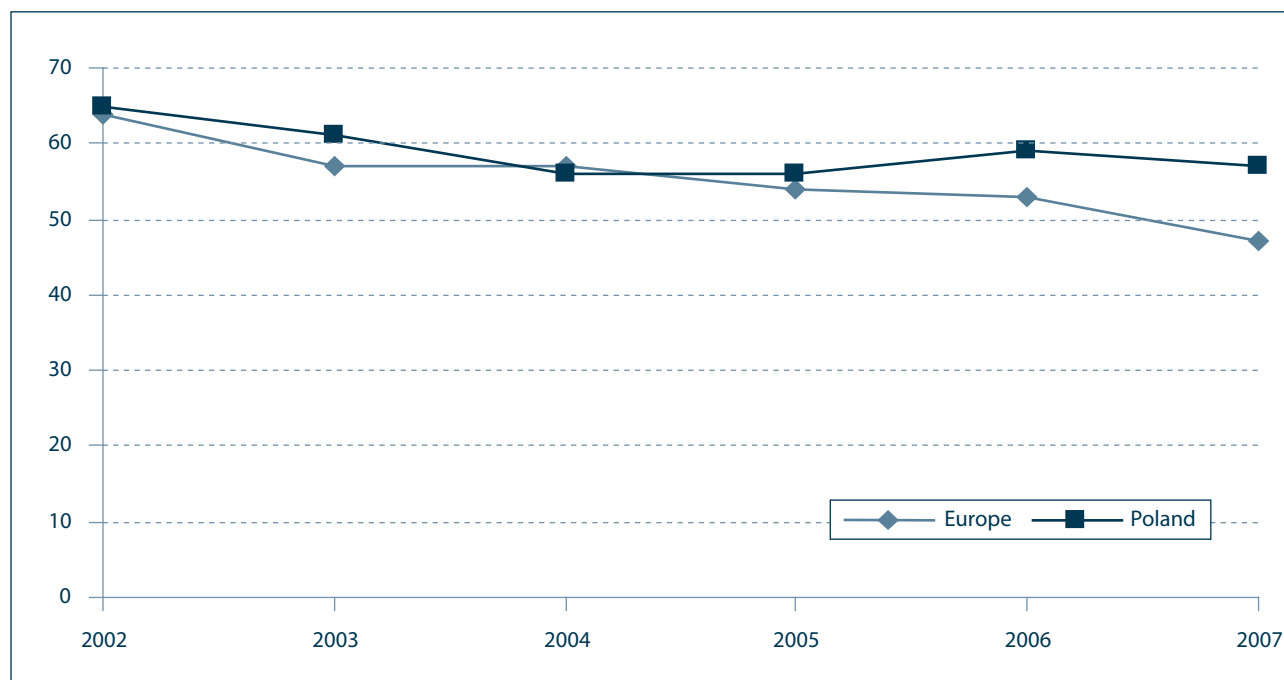


Source: CBOP.

<sup>7</sup> More on that can be found in CBOS report „Sympatia i niechęć do innych narodów”, available at [www.cbos.pl](http://www.cbos.pl)

<sup>8</sup> Data from Transatlantic Trends study are available at: [www.transatlantictrends.org](http://www.transatlantictrends.org)

**Graph 3: Warmth of feelings towards the US in Europe and Poland (on a scale from 0 to 100)**



Source: *Transatlantic Trends*, data for Europe. The graph charts the average for seven countries: Great Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, and Italy.

US in Poland was 57 on a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 means very cold or hostile, and 100 very warm and friendly. Feelings towards the EU were better, as the European Union as a whole was rated 69. The data also confirmed that positive feelings towards the US have dropped in recent years (in 2002 the score was 65), while positive emotions for EU countries have increased. In 2006, the European Union as a whole was rated 65, with Italy at 66, Great Britain 65, Spain 64, and France 61. Germany, with a score of 55, was the only one of the larger EU countries to be received with cooler feelings.

A decline in positive attitudes towards the US in recent years (especially between 2002 and 2003) was seen in other European countries as well. In those EU countries where the temperature was measured between 2002 and 2007, the average drop was from 64 in 2002 to 53 in 2007. In 2007, the most pro-American society was Romania, with a score of 67.

### **POLAND: BETWEEN THE US AND THE EU**

The change in feelings about America and its people suggests that attitudes towards the US have to be analyzed against the background of Poles' attitudes towards the European Union. Opinions about America are influenced not only by reactions

to US foreign policy and opinions on Polish-American relations, but by Poland's EU membership as well.

Before EU accession, Polish people rejected the idea of a trade-off between cooperating with the US and with the EU, not wanting to be forced to choose between the American and the European option. The public agreed with the political elite in this respect: Poland should strive for both good relations with the EU and special relations with the US. Although this position was not always understood by Poland's EU partners and irritated them at times (Poland was even called "America's Trojan horse in Europe"), it was ardently pursued.

That Polish people saw no contradiction in choosing both the American and the European option was due to the fact that they regarded both the US and the EU nations as Western countries. In Poland, the West is a symbol of economic development and of the progress of civilization, wealth and well-being. Countries seen as belonging to the West are viewed positively: we want to imitate them and be one of them. These aspirations, however, are not always accompanied by full understanding of the differences in European and US socio-economic rules, value systems, and political and cultural ori-

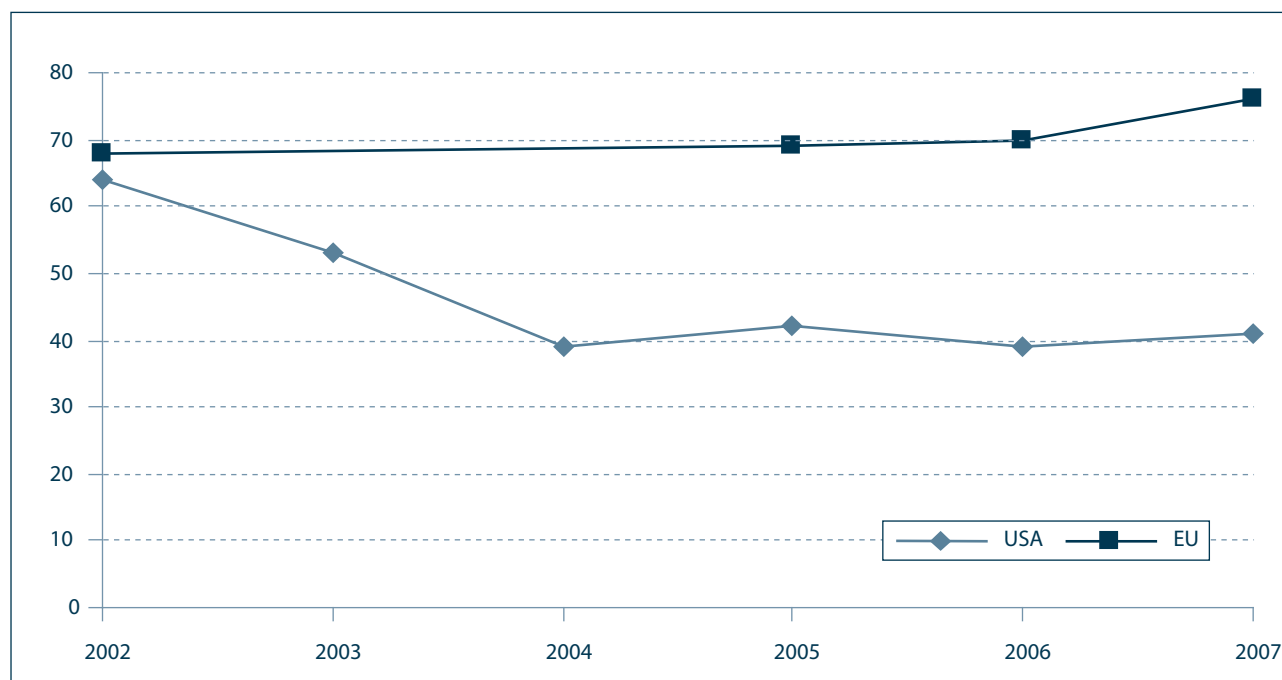
entations. Only in recent years have Poles started to see any significant differences between EU countries and the US; this process has not had a significant impact on attitudes towards America.

Poles have been very satisfied with the effects of EU membership so far. The public believes it has helped speed up economic development, reduce unemployment and improve living conditions. More and more people see investments around them that have been co-financed from EU funds. People also believe that EU accession has improved the position of Poland in Europe. Satisfaction with these results has raised support for membership to 86%, which is almost universal<sup>9</sup>. Another result that is rarely discussed but is very important is the improvement in Polish people's self-image due to their EU membership. After three years, Poles regard themselves far more favorably than before accession<sup>10</sup>. They are losing their self-doubt, and when they compare themselves with West Europeans they see not only their weaknesses but also their strong points. They feel more and more European, but at the same time

have kept and even strengthened their cultural and national identity. Satisfaction with the results of accession and the improvement in Poles' self-image as members of the European family of nations have strengthened their ties with other European countries. Polish people associate their well-being and economic development with membership in the EU. Poles also want to extend political cooperation within the EU and build new common European institutions, even if this is not always reflected in the policies of the Polish government.

Polish people want a Europe that is not only economically and politically strong, but a global player as well. In the Transatlantic Trends study from 2007, 84% of Polish people agreed that the EU should take more responsibility for dealing with international threats. In the same study, 76% favored strong EU leadership in world affairs. On the other hand, people are split over any strengthening of US leadership, with slightly more people regarding strong US leadership as undesirable (43%) than desirable (41%).

**Graph 4: It is desirable that the US/EU show strong leadership in world affairs (in %)**



Source: *Transatlantic Trends*, 2007.

Note: Ambivalent responses are omitted.

<sup>9</sup> More on this can be found in CBOS report BS/70/2007 „Ocena skutków przystąpienia Polski do UE po trzech latach członkostwa”

<sup>10</sup> CBOS report BS/118/2007 „Zmiany wizerunku Polaka i Europejczyka po trzech latach członkostwa Polski w UE”

Poles' preference for the EU rather than the US as a global political leader indicates that they hope for a change in the current model of international leadership, which they would rather see based on economic strength than on military power. In the 2007 Transatlantic Trends study, 93% of Poles agreed that in dealing with international threats, the EU should spend more money on development aid. Almost three-quarters (71%) supported using trade to influence other countries' behavior. The majority believed that the EU should commit more troops for peacekeeping missions. At the same time, 76% rejected the idea of committing more troops for combat missions. In general, Poles do not believe that military action can yield positive results, and only a quarter of Poles (26%) agree that under some conditions, war is necessary to obtain justice. In EU countries, by comparison, 32% believe that war can be the means of last resort, while in the US the figure is 74%. This would indicate that expectations of US leadership around the world have not been fulfilled.

Although confidence in American leadership has been undermined in recent years, a large segment of the Polish public (41%, TT 2006) supports strengthening the partnership between the US and the EU on defense policy and international relations. Only Romanians (51%) are more supportive of this. In

other European countries, more people would rather see the EU remain independent of the US.

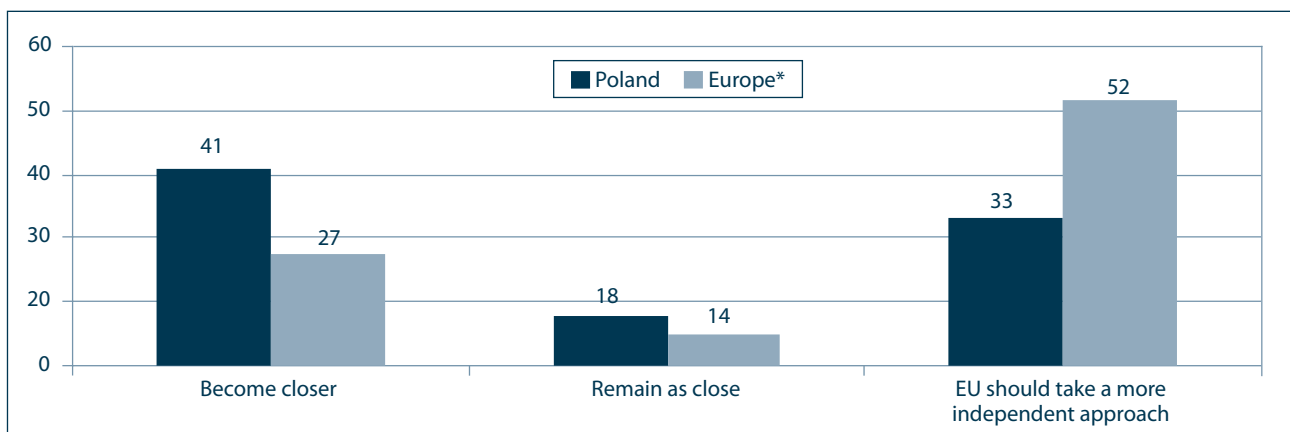
Although support for a partnership between the EU and the US is relatively high, it is lower than in previous years, a trend seen in all other European countries except France and Italy. In 2004, 44% of Polish people supported strengthening EU-US relations, vs. 49% in 2005.

The last TT study from 2007 also proves that Polish society supports closer cooperation between the EU and the US. The majority (57%) believe that Europe should address international problems in partnership with the United States, while 37% support independent EU actions. In the EU, the opinion that partnership with the US is necessary also prevailed (52%), though it was less commonly voiced.

### *Europe: Anti-American or anti-Bush?*

An analytical problem arises when the data from the years 2003-2007 are analyzed: does the decline in support for America's international role signal a shift in attitudes towards the US *per se*, or rather disaffection with President George W. Bush, his policies and his administration? To what extent is George Bush equated with America? This question can only be answered conclusively after a new ad-

**Graph 5: Do you think that the partnership on security and diplomatic affairs between the US and the EU should become closer, should remain about the same, or should the EU take a more independent approach from the US?\***



Source: *Transatlantic Trends*.

Note: Ambivalent responses are omitted.

\* Europe = average for 12 countries: France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Slovakia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, and Poland.



ministration takes over in 2009, but an analysis of comparative trends offers some insights.

In European countries, attitudes towards the US differ from feelings about George W. Bush: Europeans do not equate American policy with Bush. Throughout 2002-2007, support for strong US leadership remained about twice as high as approval of George W. Bush's handling of international problems. Both indices fell, but the gap remained. A large proportion of Europeans retain confidence in the US as a global player in the post-Bush era.

In Poland the picture is different. The data suggest that Polish respondents equate American leadership with Bush's policies. The drop in confidence in American leadership in Poland was similar to that in the EU, but on the other hand, Polish people remained exceptionally supportive of Bush. His approval ratings fell sharply, but are still higher than in any other EU country except Romania. Bush's approval ratings are even higher in Poland than in the US.

Most people in Poland (53%) think that the management of the war in Iraq is the main reason that relations between the US and Europe have deteriorated in recent years. However, they tend not to blame Bush personally (15%). In European countries, the opinion that the war in Iraq is the culprit (38%) is followed only narrowly by the belief that Bush himself is to blame (34%)<sup>11</sup>.

In a global perspective, Poland has always been a place where George W. Bush enjoyed relatively high popularity. In 2000, 40% thought that from the Polish perspective, Bush would be a better president, compared to 7% who supported Al Gore. In 2004, in a global survey of international electoral preferences in 35 countries before the US elections<sup>12</sup>, Poland was one of only three countries where more people favored Bush than Kerry (the other two being Nigeria and the Philippines). The result was 31% to 26% in Poland, making it the only European country where this happened. The only other Central European country polled, the Czech Republic, supported Kerry overwhelmingly.

**Table 1: Un/desirability of the U.S. strong leadership**

## POLAND

How desirable is it that the US exert strong leadership in world affairs?	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Desirable	64	53	39	42	39	40
Undesirable	22	34	47	44	44	43
Do you approve or disapprove of the way US President George W. Bush is handling foreign policy?						
Approve	62	58	42	53	40	42
Disapprove	26	30	51	37	46	44

## EUROPE\*

How desirable is it that the US exert strong leadership in world affairs?	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Desirable	64	45	39	41	40	39
Undesirable	31	49	55	55	54	54
Do you approve or disapprove of the way US President George W. Bush is handling foreign policy?						
Approve	38	30	23	26	19	19
Disapprove	56	64	74	70	76	77

Source: *Transatlantic Trends*.

\* Europe = Average for 7 countries: France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, the UK and Portugal.

<sup>11</sup> Transatlantic Trends, 2007

<sup>12</sup> PIPA/Globescan/CBOS survey, available at [www.pipa.org](http://www.pipa.org)

## AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE US

American foreign policy has had a direct impact on Poland given that the US is not only our NATO ally, but also led the “coalition of the willing” which divided NATO members into those who supported and those who opposed the war in Iraq. Poland’s decision to participate in this operation was a turning point both in Polish-US relations and in Polish people’s view of the US since 1989.

With the outbreak of the war in Iraq, America ceased to be a benevolent superpower for Poles. People began to question the US role as a “global policeman”. People also started to look at Poland’s participation on US missions in terms of costs and benefits. The costs were seen as including the financial burden on the state, the potential threat from terrorists, the potential death of Polish soldiers in Iraq, and conflicts with Poland’s EU partners over its participation. Benefits included an increased role for Poland on the world scene, better security guarantees from the US, and economic benefits from contracts in Iraq. For many, the costs started to outweigh the benefits.

### *Global decline in American influence*

The world has lost a lot of confidence in America as a force for good, as has Poland, especially from 2004 to 2006. According to a PIPA/Globescan/CBOS global survey, most people now see America’s influence on world affairs as mainly negative. In Poland, the proportion of people who see the US role as positive has dropped sharply as well: despite being in the majority in 2004, they fell to slightly over one-third of the population in 2006.

Compared with the other countries in the poll, however, Poles are still relatively sympathetic towards the US. Despite the drop, approval of American influence still prevails over rejection, although the trend is clearly negative. Moreover, the rise in the number of people who have no opinion (most respondents, in fact) shows that while support for America’s role is waning; it is not being replaced by active rejection of US influence.

**Table 2: Views about America’s influence on world affairs**

### **POLAND**

In your opinion, does the US have a mainly positive or a mainly negative influence on world affairs?	XI 2004	XII 2006
mainly positive	52	37
mainly negative	21	24
depends, neither, don’t know	27	39

### **WORLD\***

In your opinion, does the US have a mainly positive or a mainly negative influence on world affairs?	2004-05	2006-07
mainly positive	40	29
mainly negative	46	52
depends, neither, don’t know	14	19

\* **PIPA/GLOBESCAN/CBOS DATA. TABLE CONTAINS AVERAGE VALUES FOR 18 COUNTRIES:** Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Indonesia, Italy, Lebanon, Mexico, Philippines, Poland, Russia, South Korea and Turkey. Surveys conducted from Sept. 2004 to Jan. 2005, and Sept. 2006 to Jan. 2007.

### *Opinions of America’s handling of international problems*

Around the world, the majority of people disapprove of the way the US government is handling international problems. Iran and North Korea’s nuclear programs, the Israel-Hezbollah conflict, the war in Iraq, and global warming are all being mis-handled, according to most people in the countries surveyed. Response patterns vary little from issue to issue, suggesting that the general attitude to the US (negative overall) is being reflected in opinions on specific policy areas.

Poles take a more complex view of US foreign policy. Regarding North Korea’s nuclear program, most people approve of US policy, while approval and rejection of US policy in Iran are equally strong. However, there is strong disapproval of America’s handling of the Middle East conflicts in Lebanon and Iraq. US policy in Iraq is especially strongly criticized, probably because Polish soldiers are risking their lives there. Opinions on US foreign policy are not strongly held, as shown by the high number of “don’t know” answers.

**Table 3: Opinions of the US government's (in %)**

**POLAND (DECEMBER 2006)**

handling of...	approval	disapproval	don't know, ambivalent
Iran's nuclear program	32	34	33
the Israeli-Hezbollah war	22	40	38
North Korea's nuclear program	38	26	36
global warming	20	31	49
the war in Iraq	21	52	27

**WORLD (2006-07)\***

Opinions of the US government's handling of...	approval	disapproval	don't know, ambivalent
Iran's nuclear program	28	60	12
the Israeli-Hezbollah war	21	65	14
North Korea's nuclear program	30	54	16
global warming	27	56	17
The war In Iraq	20	73	7

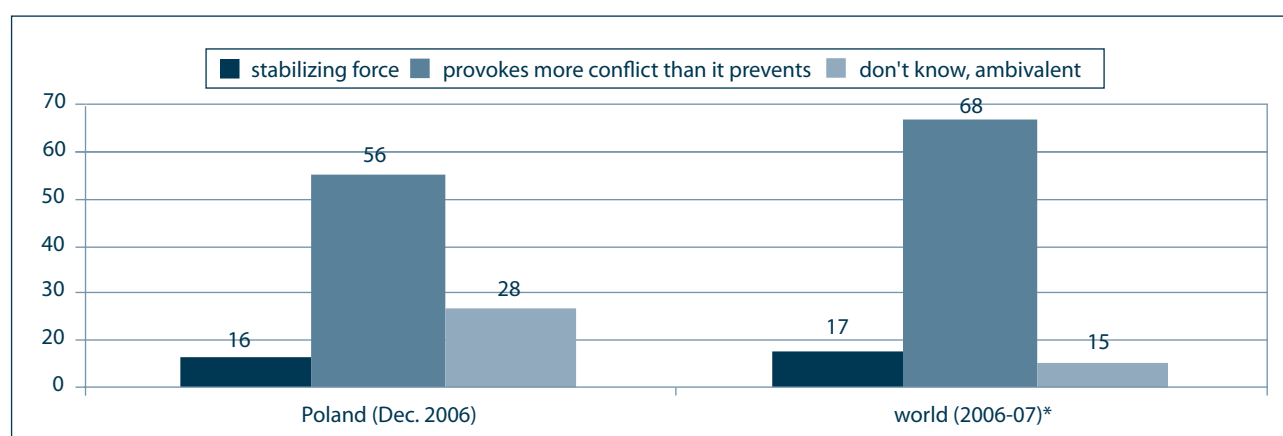
Source: PIPA/Globescan/CBOS data. \*Table contains average values for 25 countries. Survey conducted in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Russia, South Korea, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and US; fieldwork done March 22, 2006 to September 1, 2007.

Most people around the world think that the US military presence in the Middle East provokes more conflicts than it prevents. Poles are little different: only a small minority believes the US to be a stabilizing force in the region.

This increasing skepticism towards America's international role clearly has to do with the growing

feeling that the Iraq operation has been a failure, and that Polish interests are threatened. Support for Poland's participation in the Iraq operation was never high. The majority of people always opposed it, but at the beginning there was considerable support, reaching 42% in January 2004. However, it soon started to decline, and at the beginning of 2007 reached a record low.

**Graph 6: Opinions about the US military presence in the Middle East (in %)**



Source: PIPA/Globescan/CBOS data.

\* World-average values for 25 countries: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Russia, South Korea, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and US; fieldwork done March 22, 2006 to Sept. 1, 2007.

**Table 4: Support for Polish troops in Iraq (in %)**

	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	I	II	III	V	XII	I	I	VI	
	'03						'04												'05					'06		'07	
Support	36	34	40	37	28	33	42	35	36	29	22	28	23	26	25	23	24	27	28	28	28	20	22	23	20	15	
Oppose	55	60	53	57	67	62	53	60	60	66	74	66	73	70	71	74	72	68	68	68	69	75	72	72	77	81	
Don't know	8	6	7	6	5	5	5	6	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	3	4	5	4	5	3	5	6	5	4	4	

Source: CBOS.

The public believes that having Polish troops in Iraq may be good for the Iraqis, and may strengthen Polish-US relations, but that keeping them there is not in Poland's interest. These results seem to indicate that for many people there is a trade-off between doing what is good for Poland (i.e. withdrawing from Iraq) and pursuing a policy that will produce good relations with America (i.e. remaining in Iraq).

This disaffection with international US-led military operations is evident if we consider support for the installation of the "anti-missile shield" in Poland. At the beginning, the project received a warm welcome,

but this approval soon dissipated. Most people now reject the idea of having missile launch facilities installed here.

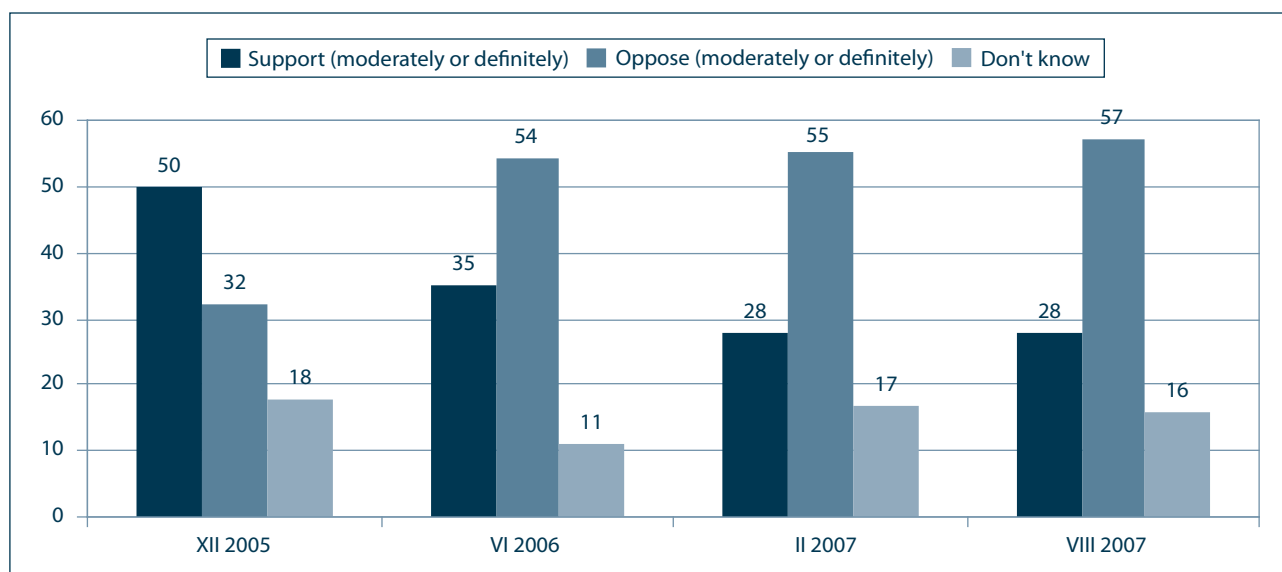
The data suggest that support for the project depends on whether or not it will be unilateral. If the anti-missile shield were a joint NATO project,

**Table 5: Polish troops in Iraq (in %)**

In your opinion, is prolonging the mission of Polish troops in Iraq another 12 months beneficial for...					
	Poland		Iraq		Polish-American relations
Definitely beneficial	3	19	17	59	22
Somewhat beneficial	16		42		45
Somewhat detrimental	36	66	13	21	8
Definitely detrimental	30		8		3
Don't know	15		21		22

Source: CBOS.

**Graph 7: Poland and the US are negotiating the installation of a US base in Poland with missile launch capabilities as part of the anti-missile shield. The system is designed to destroy nuclear missiles in case of attack from states sponsoring terrorism. Do you support or oppose the installation of such a missile launch facility?**



Source: CBOS.



it would gain more support. Most Poles believe it would be a better idea if the shield was a NATO-operated installation.

**Table 6: Views about anti-missile shield (in %)**

Do you think it is a better or a worse idea for the anti-missile shield to be a NATO-operated rather than a US-operated system?	August 2007
Better idea	40
No difference	30
Worse idea	4
Don't know	26

Source: CBOS.

## CONCLUSION

Attitudes towards America and American people have been changing in recent years. Poles have always had a particularly positive attitude to everything that comes from America, but now are starting to look at the US critically as well.

These cooler attitudes have been influenced by the increasingly critical evaluation of US foreign policy under George W. Bush. The myth of America as a guardian of the world order has been weakened by rising skepticism over the military mission in Iraq and by increasing rejection of Poland's involvement there. Poles are having doubts about the US as a global superpower and are starting to question US peace-making efforts, seeing them increasingly as yielding chaos and terrorism.

The other factor that has influenced the perception of the US in recent years is Poland's accession to the European Union. Poland's membership and the subsequent economic migration to developed West European countries have made Europe more attractive. Poles associate their hopes for a better life with EU membership. As Europe gains importance as a place to live and work, the image of America as a country of unlimited opportunities for ambitious and hard-working people is losing its grip on our imaginations. The sense of belonging to Europe is becoming stronger, while the emotional distance to the US is growing.

This trend is being reinforced by economic factors. For many people, America is no longer attractive from the economic perspective. Rising incomes in Poland and the falling value of the US dollar relative to the Polish zloty have made working in the USA less lucrative than it used to be. Getting a job in America is not just difficult due to the visa requirement, but also costly (both financially and emotionally) due to the distance between Poland and the US. With the decision of some EU countries (especially the UK and Ireland) to open their labor markets, the advantages of the EU relative to the US have increased. Poles working in Europe can maintain their ties to their home country in ways that are impossible for people working in America, and earn about the same.

Criticisms of George W. Bush's foreign policies and increasing identification with the EU have prompted Poles to prefer the EU as a global leader rather than the US. It is possible that Poles are hoping that the model of global leadership changes from the current one, which is based on the military dominance of the US.

While we believe the factors discussed above to be the key determinants of people's attitudes, there may be others. For instance, the formation of an international civil society has begun in the new EU member states. One example is the anti-globalization movement, which questions the model of globalization proposed by the US. Polish activists were among the most active at the G8 summit in Heiligendamm, where protesters tried to disturb the conference. One indicator that their arguments may be gaining currency is that close to one-third of adult Poles reject the US' handling of global warming.

However, all of this needs to be seen in context. In our analysis of the changing perception of America and Americans, we considered trends from the last few years. Although feelings for America have indeed cooled, it is too early to talk about a qualitative change in attitudes to the US and its society. America remains a country we like and respect, and one with which we should maintain close relations.

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NURTURING ATLANTICISTS IN CENTRAL EUROPE:  
CASE OF SLOVAKIA AND POLAND

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